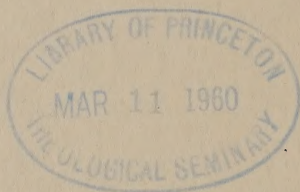


THE PHILOSOPHY OF EVIL

Paul Śiwek, S. J.



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THE PHILOSOPHY OF EVIL

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PREFACE

Humanity has always been eager, even anxious, to solve the problem of Evil and has made different attempts to do so. Some deny the existence of God, others doubt His Providence or His Omnipotence. Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Neo-Manichaeism took refuge in dualism, according to which the world is governed by two rival powers. One produces Good, the other Evil. Finally, pantheism categorically denies the existence of any evil in the world.

What is the value of all these theories? This was the subject matter of a course I gave at the Gregorian University in Rome some years ago. Later, the material was embodied in a series of lectures given at the Philosophical Institute of Rio de Janeiro. Under the title, *The Problem of Evil*, these lectures appeared in a volume published in French and later in Spanish.

In 1945 I was honored by a very kind invitation to join the faculty of Fordham University in the capacity of research professor of philosophy. When I came to New York, I was asked to treat of Evil in one of my courses in the graduate school. At this time I had further opportunity to study other important questions related to this problem, among them pessimism, optimism, the history of the notion of evil, and such. All these were carefully reviewed, developed, and provided with further explanations. When pressed by my distinguished colleagues and my students to make the content of my course available to a broader public, I finally decided to do so. Because of its wider scope and fuller

treatment, I have entitled this volume *The Philosophy of Evil*.

This book has been primarily designed for students who pursue the study of philosophy in colleges and universities. Indeed, there is scarcely a problem in philosophy that occurs with such frequency as that of Evil. It forms a part of ontology, where the notions of Value, of Good, and of Finality are being examined. In discussing theodicy, the problem of Evil must be considered in any attempt to establish the existence of the Creator, His unity, goodness, sanctity, infinity, justice, and providence. And it is quite impossible to present a coherent system of moral philosophy without having an accurate notion of Evil and the role it plays. This book presumes to present a complete synthesis of the problem of Evil which is usually only fragmentarily treated under the various subdivisions of philosophy.

But the usefulness of this book is by no means limited to students of philosophy. Pastors, educators, and others are all too frequently confronted with the problem of Evil. They are asked many questions by the distraught, who press for an answer. And their reply must be a satisfying one.

This is not all. Many plain people of many kinds are also tortured by the ever-recurring problem of Evil. Unable to resolve it, some of these persons abandon all religion, others commit desperate and foolish deeds, still others become utterly indifferent to all distinction between what is Good, what Evil.

The present book is intended for the use of all the various classes of people that are enumerated above. Because of this I have exerted every effort to write as clearly as possible and to avoid technical terminology. It has been my utmost endeavor, however, to sacrifice no part of the matter to the form.

PREFACE

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Before I conclude, I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Robert W. Gleason, S. J., for invaluable assistance which he generously gave while the book was being written.

Paul Siwek, S. J.

Fordham University

April, 1951

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF EVIL

Introduction

METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS

1. If we wish to solve any problem, we must first define it clearly, and this is particularly true when there is the question of a complex problem. Before approaching the one we are now considering, we must carefully examine its elements, otherwise we risk either attacking fictitious problems or evading the real ones.

2. Let us first observe that it is extremely important not to confuse the question of the *origin of Evil* with that of the *nature of Evil*. They are two entirely different questions, whether considered from the logical or the historical viewpoint.

3. Let us first take the logical problem. To search for the origin of Evil is to search for that which caused Evil to exist, while to ask what is the nature of Evil forces us to a definition of its essence. Now the existence of Evil and the essence of Evil should, from the logical viewpoint, be considered as two different things. Moreover, the origin of Evil evokes the idea of efficient cause, and the nature of Evil that of formal cause. These two kinds of cause (efficient and formal) are, from the logical standpoint, clearly distinct. That is why we may know one cause without the other. For instance, we know the origin of electricity, and the proof of that is the fact that we know how to produce it as we will. But does anyone flatter himself that he knows its essential nature?

4. We arrive at the same conclusion when we consider the historical viewpoint. The problem of the origin of Evil has been discussed in all its fullness from remote antiquity. The problem of the nature of Evil has only more recently received attention. Indeed, it is the origin of Evil which is the principal question in the holy books called Avesta, or Zend, and in particular in the hymns known as the *Gathas*. The same problem also dominated the astronomical doctrine of the Chaldeans, according to which the planets were gods, two of whom worked for good, two were malevolent, and the three others shared the opposing qualities of the first four.¹ The problem of the origin of Evil also strongly impregnated the religious beliefs of the ancient Greeks if we are to believe Plutarch. They considered Jupiter to be the author of all Good in the world, and Pluto to be the medium of all Evil.² We again find the same problem clearly stated in the teachings of Empedocles, of the Pythagoreans, and of Anaxagoras. Indeed, we know the importance Empedocles attached to Love and Strife; the Pythagoreans, to Unity (the definite, the stable, the odd) and to Dyad (the Infinite, Movement, the Even); Anaxagoras, to Intelligence and to the Infinite. Now Love, Unity, and Intelligence are principles of Good; Strife, Dyad, and the Infinite, on the contrary, produce Evil. Plato also very often discourses on the origin of Evil, while he almost never speaks of its nature. But we shall return to all these theories later. We shall then have the opportunity to see them in more detail.

5. For the moment, let us see what antiquity knew of the nature of Evil.

Melissus, the disciple of Parmenides, relegates Evil to the world of "human opinions". In the world such as "persuasive

¹ Plutarch περὶ Ἰσίδος καὶ Ὀσίριδος, xlv, xlvi.

² Op. cit.

truth" presents us, Evil is inconceivable. Indeed, Evil implies a change by which one loses something.³ Now as Being is one⁴ and infinite,⁵ it is absolutely immutable.⁶ It cannot then be touched by any Evil, it cannot be subject to any suffering. Moreover, Being is eternal.⁷ Now the thing which can suffer cannot exist eternally. Because to suffer is, as we just said, to undergo a change. But change cannot exist eternally, because even if a thing changes "by one hair during ten thousand years" it would already have lost all in the course of all eternity; it would have ceased existing.⁸ Finally, Being is homogeneous.⁹ Now suffering implies variety of parts, because can man really suffer in "his whole being"? To suffer is to change. To suffer in his whole being would be to change in all his reality. But to change in all his reality would be to cease or to begin to exist, and that is inconceivable in an eternal and necessary Being.

In the *δισσοὶ λόγοι* or *Dialexeis*—a work composed about 400 B.C.—we find, in the first chapter, the theory of Evil conceived partly in the sophistic, partly in the Socratic spirit. The author opposes to the thesis an antithesis, to be refuted in its turn.¹⁰ There are in Greece—so we read—two different conceptions (*δισσοὶ λόγοι*) with regard to Evil. Some people say that Evil is distinct from Good; others, on the contrary, sustain the theory that Evil is identical with Good, since what is bad for one can be good for another; illness is bad for the patient, but it is good for the physicians;

³ H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Melissus Fragm. 1, 7, 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Fragm. 5, 6, 6a, 7, 8, 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Fragm. 3, 4, 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Fragm. 1, 7, 8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Fragm. 2, 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Fragm. 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Fragm. 7, 8. Being has no body (Fragm. 9, 10), nor consequently has it parts.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Fragm. 83, n. 1.

death is bad for those who die, but it is good for the merchants of funeral necessities and for the makers of monuments. But the theory which identifies Evil with Good is not free from great difficulties. The author shows this by different examples.

The relativity of Evil is strongly expressed in some fragments of Heraclitus. The water of the sea—we read in Fragment 61—is good for fishes, but it is harmful to men. The physicians who cut, burn, and torture the patients in every manner still complain of being paid too little by them. Naturally, because they consider these tortures as good.¹¹ In Fragment 58, Heraclitus expressly says that “Good and Evil are one and the same thing”. It is for this reason that all things are good and just for God. It is only by men that some of them are considered as just and others as unjust.¹²

Good and Evil are relative terms, according to Heraclitus, in still another sense. In order to enjoy certain good, one must have experienced certain evil. Indeed, “it is illness which makes health appreciated”. In the same way, the pleasure of satiety must be preceded by the pain of hunger, and rest pleases us only in the measure in which we feel fatigue.¹³ Really, “it would not be good for men to see all their wishes accomplished”.¹⁴

Socrates, considering his mission to be that of leading his fellow citizens to a moral life and to felicity, was not at all interested in questions which had no direct relation to man. It is for this reason that he made no effort to give us a general theory of Good and Evil. It is of man’s good and evil that he wished to speak. Good is identical, he says, not only with

¹¹ *Ibid.*, *Fragm.* 58.

¹² *Ibid.*, *Fragm.* 102.

¹³ *Ibid.*, *Fragm.* 111.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, *Fragm.* 110.

the "Beautiful" but also with the "Useful".¹⁵ It is for this reason that no one can deliberately do Evil. Because to act thus, would be to act directly against one's own interest. If, then, someone does an evil action, it is only because, in the given circumstances, he does not know what is useful for him. Nevertheless utility cannot be confounded with any species of classic utilitarianism.¹⁶ For the felicity, which this utility is to procure for us, has in itself nothing in common with success in life, with the pleasures of the senses, with riches, and so on.¹⁷ It is rather the pleasure "which flows from our consciousness of becoming better",¹⁸ of our approaching God, of perfecting ourselves.¹⁹ Happiness implies moral virtues.²⁰

Plato, who describes at length the origin of Evil, is very miserly in his teaching about its nature. Evil—we read in the *Sophist*—can reach not only the body but also the soul. It can take two different forms: illness and ugliness. In both cases we have to deal with a breach of harmony, with an absence of measure.²¹

What particularly interests Plato in the problem of Evil is the moral side. Borrowing the principal ideas of Socrates, he develops and presents them more profoundly. These are so well known that we need not insist upon them here. Let us only note in passing that in the first period (the Socratic period) Plato considered moral Evil as an error which must be abolished by instruction.²² But later, under the influence of the Pythagoreans, he no longer considers moral Evil an

¹⁵ Xenophon *Memorabilia Socratis* iv, 6, 8, 9.

¹⁶ Plato *Apolog.* 29B. Xenophon *Memor.* iv, 5. 9; iii. 12. 1 ff; iv. 4. 17 ff.

¹⁷ Xenophon *op. cit.* iii. 9. 14-15; i. 6. 8-10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* i. 6. n. 9.

¹⁹ Xenophon *Memor.* i. 6. n. 10; iii. 9. n. 15.

²⁰ Xenophon *Memor.* i. 6. n. 14.

²¹ *Gorgias* 464B-D, 513D, 521E-522A.

²² *Gorgias* 477 sq., 479D.

error: it is an illness of the soul which must be cured by punishment. The greatest evil for man is to commit a moral evil and to go unpunished. Because man is then deprived of that which alone can effectively correct him.²³ The cause of our evil is the body with its tendencies and desires. It is a prison of the soul, its tomb.

The Sceptics, as Diogenes Laertius says, denied the existence of "natural evil". Indeed, they said, if a natural evil existed, it would be the same for everybody. Now that is not so. Certain things which are considered as bad by one, are found good by another. Antisthenes, e.g., sees an Evil in pleasure, while Epicurus considers it as a good.²⁴

The theory of Evil which some Gnostics professed, reminds us by more than one trait of that of the Sceptics. So, e.g., Carpocrates of Alexandria taught that every action is in itself indifferent; it is good or bad only in "human opinion".

The disciples of Bardesanes, who simplified the gnostic system, taught that Evil comes, properly speaking, neither from Nature nor from Fate. It is the consequence of free will.

Crantor, one of the most illustrious representatives of the ancient Academy, composed a work on suffering (*περὶ πένθους*) which has exercised great influence upon several "consoling writings"—particularly upon those of Cicero and Pseudo-Plutarch. Crantor considers suffering as a merited punishment; it imposes itself upon us as a necessity of Nature, as the will of God.

Epicurus and his disciples have said a great deal about

²³ *Gorgias* 493A ff.

²⁴ Nicomachus, son of Aristotle, assures us that Eudoxus also admitted this theory. "He used to say"—relates Diogenes Laertius (viii. c. 8, n. 88)—"that pleasure is good." According to Aristotle, he would have taught that it is pleasure which is the greatest good (*Eth. Nic.* i. 12. 1101^b 27 ff.; x. 2. 1172^b 9 ff.). It is probable that it was against Eudoxus that Plato wrote his dialogue *Philebus* (*On Pleasure*).

Evil, but they principally considered it from the moral point of view.

What contributes most to trouble minds and to make them unhappy—wrote Epicurus to his friend Herodotus—is, first, their conviction that the stars are imperishable beings enjoying perfect felicity; secondly, that certain of our actions are contrary to the will of those supreme beings before whom we shall have to render an account of our life after death.²⁵ In order to deliver us from these eternal terrors, it suffices that we set ourselves to search for “the causes of natural phenomena”.²⁶ We shall find then that “everything in Nature is explained without gods”,²⁷ and that our personal immortality is only a myth.²⁸ We shall also see that death, considered by humans “as the greatest evil”,²⁹ has really “no importance for us”.²⁹ Indeed, Evil consists in sensation. Now death deprives us of all sensation.³⁰ Why, then, be afraid of death? “So long as we live, death is absent from us; and when it is present, we shall not exist any more. So during our life and after death we have nothing to fear from death”.³¹ Whoever is well imbued with these ideas will live as happily “as a God among men”.³²

The only evil that exists is pain.³³ This can reach the soul as well as the body. And the pains of the soul are worse than those of the body because the soul can suffer not only from present evils but also from past and future evils.³⁴ The only

²⁵ Diogenes Laertius *De clarorum philosophorum vitis, dogmatibus et apophthegmatibus*, Epicurus: *Epist. ad Herodotum* n. 81.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 82.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Epicurus: *Epist. ad Pythoclum* n. 85.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Epicurus: *Epist. ad Menoeceum* n. 125.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 125.

³¹ *Ibid.*, n. 125. Cf. also n. 139.

³² *Ibid.*, n. 135.

³³ *Ibid.*, n. 129.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 137.

true good is pleasure. It is always good, because it is good by its own nature. It is this that is the motive of all our actions: we choose, e.g., virtue in view of pleasure just as we choose a clever physician in view of health.³⁵ Nevertheless it does not follow, Epicurus warns us, that we should accept every pleasure which offers itself to us. In life we must know how to choose our pleasures; we must sometimes have the courage to prefer pain to pleasure because certain pleasures are followed by great evil, while, on the contrary, a certain transitory pain can bring us much more important good.³⁶ At any rate, when we speak of the supreme good "we do not mean to speak of the pleasures of a debauched person, of the pleasures that flatter the senses . . . but rather of freedom from all corporal pains and from all confusion of mind".³⁷

✓ The Stoics' theory of Evil is also dominated by moral pre-occupation. True Evil, they said, is vice, as the only true Good is virtue. All the rest is indifferent (*ἀδιάφορον*). Such indifferent things are, e.g., life, health, pleasure, beauty, power, riches, glory, nobility of birth, and the things which are contrary to them: death, illness, fatigue, disgrace, weakness, poverty, a bad reputation, a humble birth,³⁸ because all these are in themselves neither useful nor harmful to the only true good,³⁹ which is virtue; nor are they harmful, consequently, to our happiness. It is for this reason that one can be perfectly happy without all these things, and on the contrary, one can possess them while one is unhappy.⁴⁰ With regard to practical life, these ideas were developed in dif-

³⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 138.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 129.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 131-132.

³⁸ Diogenes Laertius *op. cit.*, Zeno n. 102.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 104.

ferent ways by different Stoic authors. But that does not interest us here.

Preoccupation with morals, in the problem of Evil, is also to be seen in the Cyrenaic philosophy, which carefully distinguished the supreme good from happiness. The former is a particular pleasure which one enjoys at the present moment,⁴¹ the latter is the ensemble of present, past, and future pleasures accessible to us. It is not desirable in itself, but because of the pleasure which is inherent in it.⁴²

The Cyrenaics proved by experience that our supreme good is pleasure. Since our childhood, and previous to any deliberation, we all seek pleasure. If we obtain it, we stop; we do not look for anything more.⁴³ It is this, then, that constitutes the goal of our life.⁴⁴ It is always the good, whatever its cause may be. The wise man will look for it in all circumstances and by all the means that are at his disposal: theft, adultery, sacrilege, and so on.⁴⁵ For "there exists nothing that is just, honest, or dishonest by nature. These names are due to law and to custom" (νόμῳ καὶ ἔθει).⁴⁶

Yet the Cyrenaic philosophers did not entirely abandon the metaphysical aspect of the problem of Evil. Pain is not purely and simply the absence of pleasure.⁴⁷ The absence of pleasure is an intermediary state between pain and pleasure; it is analogous to the state of sleeping.⁴⁸ Pain is as positive as pleasure. Both consist in the movement of our spirit. Pleasure is a moderate movement, pain is a violent

⁴¹ Diogenes Laertius, *op. cit.*, Aristippus lib. ii. c. VIII, n. 89, 90.

⁴² *Ibid.*, n. 87, 88.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, n. 88.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 85, 90, 91, 97.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 99, 100.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 93. See also *ibid.*, n. 99, 100.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 89.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 89.

movement (τραχείλα κίνησις).⁴⁹ Aristippus liked to compare pleasure with a wind that is favorable to navigation, pain, with a tempest in a great sea.⁵⁰

The school founded by Hegesias strongly underlined the idea that nothing exists that is pleasant or unpleasant in itself. A thing appears to us as pleasant only because it is rare, new, and so forth.⁵¹

Let us pass on to Aristotle. He often speaks of Evil. But he does it indirectly, namely, in so far as it is in some manner implied in the notion of good as its "contrary". It is the good which constitutes the proper object of research for Aristotle. Moreover—let us add—he envisages it chiefly from the moral point of view. It is for this reason that he gives us no theory of Good as such, but rather that of a certain kind of Good, particularly of pleasure.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics* he notes that ethics must interest itself in a special manner in the problem of pleasure as well as in that of pleasure's contrary, pain, because it has to treat of happiness and the moral virtues. Now happiness, according to the common opinion, implies pleasure and excludes pain. And as to the moral virtues, we know that they concern pleasure and pain in a particular manner.⁵²

When discussing the theories on pleasure popular among his contemporaries,⁵³ he notes that it is very important not to confound the absolute good (ἀπλῶς) with the relative.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 86.

⁵⁰ See Euseb. *Praepar. Evangel.* 14, 18, 32.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, n. 94.

⁵² *Eth. Nic.* vii. 11. 1152^b 1-5. See *ibid.*, 1104^b 8-1105^a 13.

⁵³ One theory said: "No pleasure can be good" (*ibid.*, 1152^b 8-9), "since good and pleasure are really distinct" (*ibid.*). The other defended that "certain pleasures are good, though the majority of them are bad" (*ibid.*, 10-11). Finally, certain philosophers said: "Even supposing all pleasures to be good, the greatest good cannot be a pleasure" (*ibid.*, 11-13). Aristotle returns to these theories again in other places (cf. *ibid.*, x. chap. 1-5).

⁵⁴ *Eth. Nic.* vii. 12. 1152^b 26-27.

The former is that which pleases everyone, the latter pleases only certain persons, and often even only at particular moments of their lives.⁵⁵ Moreover, we must not forget that certain pleasures are purely apparent; such are, e.g., the pleasures which one experiences when ill.⁵⁶

The distinctions which we have just mentioned apply to the notion of Evil. "Certain pains are bad in an absolute manner (ἀπλῶς), others are bad only in so far as they deprive us of some good".⁵⁷ There are some pleasures which essentially imply some pain or need that is felt. Such are notably the pleasures of eating. But some other pleasures come without our experiencing any pain beforehand.⁵⁸

Having applied all these distinctions to the contemporary theories of pleasure, Aristotle demonstrates that all pleasure is not bad; moreover, he does not hesitate to affirm that "the supreme good" is always "some pleasure".⁵⁹ Indeed, pleasure is an activity of our faculties. Now what is happiness if not precisely such an activity of our faculties? ⁶⁰ For it is only such an activity which is really "perfect".⁶¹ Bodily pleasures are in themselves good. They become bad only when they surpass a certain measure,⁶² and because they prevent us from enjoying more noble pleasures, those of the spirit.⁶³ The fact that bodily pleasures are sought for by children and by animals only proves that they are not the absolute good.⁶⁴

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 31-32. If the absolute good pleases everyone, it is because it is said to be such in relation to our nature. The relative and apparent good is said to be such only in relation to a particular state in which our being is.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vii. 13. 1153^b 7-9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, vii. 12. 1152^b 33-34.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, vii. 13. 1153^b 7-9; 12-22.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vii. 13. 1153^b 9-12.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, vii. 13. 1153^b 12-22.

⁶² *Ibid.*, vii. 13. 1153^b 19-22. See 14. 1154^a 7-11.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, vii. 14. 1154^a 19-21; 33. 1154^b 19.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, vii. 12. 1153^a 27-36.

Every nature has its own pleasure. Now as our nature is composed of elements of different natures, we find nothing in this world that can suffice to give us pleasure always. God alone, whose nature is simple, can enjoy such unique pleasure.⁶⁵ Pleasure and pain are natural to man. It is thanks to this, undoubtedly, that we have the custom of directing youth by means of them.⁶⁶

But we will not follow Aristotle further in the development of his ideas. They would teach us but little on the metaphysical nature of good and evil. We must rather address ourselves to certain statements scattered in different Aristotelian works and try to make a synthesis of them.

From God—Aristotle says—can come only good. It is from Him that we have being and life. Nevertheless all participations in the good are not equal. But this inequality has not its source in God but in the “potency” which affects every act which is not a pure Act. It is for this reason that Evil exists only in the particular things which are composed of “form” and potency or “matter”. Yet matter is not a “bad principle”. It contains no positive tendency to Evil. In itself it is indifferent to Good and Evil. It occasions Evil in so far as it is a potency to the opposites, to the “contraries”. It is a potency to Good as well as to Evil.

✓ Passing from the cause of Evil to Evil itself, Aristotle notes that Evil should not be confounded with Good because their essences are entirely different.⁶⁷ To say, with Heraclitus, that Good is identical with Non-Good is the same as to say that a man does not differ from a horse.⁶⁸ The philosophers who confound Evil with multiplicity, or with inequality, do not

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, vii. 14. 1154^b 20-33. See also *ibid.*, xii. 9. 1075^a 5-7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, x. 1. 1172^a 19-27.

⁶⁷ *Physic.* i. 2. 185^b 19-24.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

commit a lesser error.⁶⁹ Evil is the contrary of good.⁷⁰ If the good is always "the End because of which" (οὐ ἕνεκα) one makes a thing, Evil is what one avoids.⁷¹ It deprives us of some perfection. It is, in itself, nothing positive. It is only the destruction of good.⁷² As this destruction can be realized in different manners, Evil is "multiform", while Good is uniform;⁷³ so, e.g., there is only one way of being in good health, but illnesses are legion; one can fail in virtue in more than one way.⁷⁴

6. What we have said up to now shows that antiquity knew but little about the nature of Evil. In order to find an established doctrine on this last point, we must go to the Fathers of the Church, notably to St. Augustine. So, as we said before, the problem of the origin of Evil engaged human thought from very early times, but that of the nature of Evil was clearly stated at only a relatively recent date.

That is not surprising. The problem of the origin of Evil is a practical one. Evil, coming every minute into life, interrupting its peaceful course, breaking its equilibrium, forces the human being to a deeper and livelier consciousness and stimulates his reaction to defense. But how can he defend himself if he does not know the origin of Evil? Man began, therefore, at a very early date to search for this origin. The problem of the nature of Evil, on the other hand, is more or less metaphysical; its study requires more of the intellect. Also, it asks of human intelligence a certain degree of development which enables it to be interested in imper-

⁶⁹ *Metaph. N* (xiv). 4. 1091^b 30-1092^a 4.

⁷⁰ *Physic. i.* 2. 185^b 19-21; *Eth. Nic. vii.* 13. 1153^b 1-6; vii. 14. 1154^a 11; x. 1173^a 6-7.

⁷¹ *Eth. Nic. i.* 7. 1097^a 15-20; x. 2. 1172^b 35-36; 1173^a 9-10; vii. 13. 1153^b 1-3.

⁷² *Eth. Nic. ii.* 6. 1106^b 29; iv. 5. 1126^a 12; iii. 12. 1119^a 23.

⁷³ *Magn. Moral. i.* 24. 1192^a 11-13.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

sonal questions and to perceive the nobility of study, the value of knowledge. All minds are not equally attracted by problems which do not affect practical life.

7. But this subject demands that we be precise. We have said that the origin and the nature of Evil are two distinct problems.

Does that mean that we can solve one without paying any attention to the other? We do not think so. On the contrary, we are convinced that it is a misunderstanding of the intimate association of these two problems which has given rise to dualism, a theory that explains the origin of Evil by the intervention of a second Principle essentially evil and independent of God. The real source of this theory comes, in our opinion, from a mistaken method: formerly, man hurried on to try to solve the problem of Evil without having first asked the question in what does Evil consist.

The problem of the origin of Evil cannot be solved by deduction, by a *priori* reasoning. We are obliged to return to a *posteriori* reasoning which is founded on the principle of causality. Now before looking for the cause, we must first know the effect, and we must know its nature. For instance, if we wish to prove that the soul does not owe its existence to "generation" but to "creation", it is necessary first of all to show the soul's characteristics of simplicity and spirituality; in a word, to determine its nature. In the same way, if we wish to know the origin of Evil, we must first know in what Evil consists. A lack of precision in this respect inevitably leads to a false solution.

Let us suppose that we approach the problem of Evil with a confused idea of Evil, considering it, for instance, as a positive reality. This would obviously necessitate a positive cause. But how could God, the supreme Good, produce Evil? To

avoid the obvious contradiction, we should be tempted to think of another first Principle besides God, which would explain the existence of Evil. And so we should be led to the dualistic conception.

PART I
EVIL

1

EVIL, THE PRIVATION OF BEING

1. What is Evil? If we ask this question of those who have no metaphysical pretensions, it is probable that we shall receive very diverse definitions. Evil is sickness, it is death, one will say. It is misery, disgrace, will be the opinion of another—and so on. These answers merit great attention for they are dictated by that good sense which the true philosopher must never neglect.

Why are sickness and death Evil? Good sense, common sense, will be at a loss to reply. Common sense is not accustomed to subtle discussions and abstract definitions. It lives in the concrete; it thrives on immediate contact with surrounding reality, and its answers remain concrete.

Instead, then, of requiring an abstract definition of Evil from common sense, let us place common sense in an actual situation and notice its reactions. Show it a wooden statue of Socrates; the statue suddenly falls down and an arm is broken. Is that an Evil? Common sense will reply, not without some surprise: an Evil? For whom? For Socrates? But this wooden Socrates is not a real being; is it not merely a figure, a symbol? What evil can happen to a symbol? A fictitious one, of course; but you mean, no doubt, to speak of a real Evil.

2. This reply that common sense gives us is very good. The Socrates carved in wood is merely a name given to a certain number of fragments of wood so arranged as to form

a resemblance to the human body, long since vanished, of the son of Sophroniscus. There is no question here of anything but a being of the imagination or, if you prefer the term, a "logical being" (*ens rationis*). The only reality in the wooden Socrates lies in the fragments of which it is composed. But these, being without intrinsic cohesion amongst themselves, do not make a real being. The Socrates of wood is but a union of different beings distinct from one another. So if we ask the "wooden Socrates" whether he experienced "Evil" in falling from his pedestal, we must ask this: Did the pieces of wood that composed the statue suffer from being divided one from the other? Common sense answers: What have these pieces lost by being divided? It is all the same to them whether they are together or separated; they certainly have no preference. And if so, how can we speak of division as an "evil"?

Let us imagine another scene. The living Socrates fell down once in the heat of a discussion and broke his arm. That is certainly an evil, says common sense, for that Socrates was not simply a combination of arms and legs, of a trunk and a head; he was a being perfectly one. Anything that tended to disunite him, however little, was an evil, for with his unity he loses his being. Let us take another example. No one would say it is an evil for water if it is decomposed by electric current into oxygen and hydrogen. But everyone will declare without a shadow of hesitation that death, which destroys a living being, is an Evil. We could go on giving examples indefinitely.

3. The notion of Evil is, then, inseparably bound up with that of contradiction, resulting from the opposition that the being meets with in the pursuit of his desires. Evil is that which opposes a plan decided on, or upsets an order of things to which we are accustomed, or disturbs the normal rhythm

of life. Evil is, then, the opposite of Good. It is as darkness to light. That is not our comparison; we find it among the ancients. To know what darkness is, we must have seen rays of light. To understand Evil, we must have some knowledge of Good.

4. However, one may look in vain for a "proper" definition of Good, for a "proper" definition links one idea to another more general one, or brings back a particular idea to a generic one, a derived idea to an original. Now the concept of the Good is one of those that cannot be so contracted because they are universal and comprehend everything. There is no reality which in some relation may not be considered "good".

5. But without being able to give a proper definition of Good, it is always possible for us to turn to what is called "descriptive definition". By describing the Good we can render an idea of it more clear and precise. To do so, we will consider attentively what we might call its traces, its reflection. We will observe it as one observes an object in a mirror.

What are the traces that Good leaves, what is its reflection? The answer is easy. All reality shows itself under the form of action; a reality which produces no result is for us tantamount to nothing—it would be unknown to us; for knowledge of any object implies its action on ourselves, as we have explained in another work.

What are, then, the effects of Good? It is an attraction of a special nature: Good draws us, captivates us, enraptures us. This attraction is so obvious that Aristotle, following his predecessors,¹ describes it as "that which all beings desire" (*οὐδ' ὁρέγεται πάντα*).² This definition, being purely de-

¹ It was probably Eudoxus who first gave this definition of Good.

² *Eth. Nic.* i. 1. 1094^a 1-3; x. 2. 1172^b 9.

scriptive (*a posteriori*), tells us nothing of the metaphysical nature of Good. To know that, we must ask ourselves why does Goodness awaken desire? To this question there is only one possible reply: because it brings a perfection to the one seeking it. The Good, then, is not a simple "name", still less is it a "negation".

6. There exists an intimate connection between Good and Being. Can one ever "desire" without desiring "something"? Even if someone asserts that he desires "nothing", it is certainly not "non-being", pure and simple, that he desires. He wants nothing "in particular"; that is all that is meant by the statement "I want nothing". But it may be objected, are there not cases where desire really does turn towards nonentity? Do we not meet people who, tired of life, overwhelmed by sorrow, ask for death, for extinction, for cessation of being? That is undoubtedly true. But we must understand why such persons desire death. Their motive is implied in the expressions that we use "tired of life", "overwhelmed by sorrow". These men desire death, nonentity, because death, nonentity, will deliver them forever from their misery, because nonentity in itself appears to them a "Good". Annihilation as such cannot be desired. Not having any reality, it cannot therefore exercise any attraction. We may say the same of all that we consider absolutely "impossible". The impossible in itself is again a non-being, a nonentity.

What we have just said clearly shows that between Good and Being there is a close connection, a connection but not precise identity.³ Indeed, one cannot simply identify Good with Being because the Good, so far as it is an object of desire, is relative, while Being is absolute. For this reason, if

³ Suarez says that some ancient philosophers, in particular Hervaues (*Quodlib.* iii. q. 2), confused Good with the absolute Reality of the perfect being.

one could suppress all desire in the world, one would by the same token cause all notion of Good to disappear. What would then exist could not be called "good" for the same reason that one could no more speak of "truth" if one had suppressed all intelligence, since "truth" is unintelligible without relation to intelligence.

We know that this hypothesis—the suppression of all desire—is not possible because it is impossible to suppress the absolutely Necessary Being, God. Now, the nature of God implies, as is demonstrated elsewhere, a Will. And the Will is a particular kind of desire. While this desire would tend to the Divine essence and its possible imitations, it would constitute, by the same fact, a Good. But it is not less true that the idea of Good is essentially relative. It is unintelligible without a relation to desire.⁴ Now, unlike Good, Being is an absolute notion; it implies, in itself, no relation; it emanates from the unconditioned.

This difference between Good and Being is expressed in our everyday language: we never say "my truth", "your truth"; on the other hand, we frequently hear such expressions as: "I did it for your good" or "He did it for my good". That is because Truth depends on Being, considered in its absolute reality, while the idea of Good implies a relation to the one who desires it. Even if we speak of "absolute good", this relation continues, but it has then itself for the term of its desire. Indeed, what is absolute Good? It is Good without any limitation—Good infinite in all the lines of Being, the plenitude of Good. This absolute Good, having all pos-

⁴ But we must avoid any exaggeration here. The relation to desire is necessarily required in order to constitute Good. Nevertheless, Good does not consist in this relation. The relation mentioned, considered in its formal reality, is a being of reason (*ens rationis*). Now when desiring a good, one seeks something real; one seeks to enrich one's own individuality. But it is impossible to do so by "beings of reason".

sible perfections, has a Will too. But this (the Will) cannot, without degrading itself, tend to anything but an absolute Good. Thus the term of desire is the subject itself.

Here lies the real reason why it was impossible to see any Evil in the fact that the statue of Socrates had an arm broken. There was no way of connecting this evil with a possessive pronoun—mine or thine—and common sense concluded, “no being has suffered, therefore no evil”.

7. For the same reason, common sense refuses to recognize a good or an evil which befalls an inorganic substance. And philosophy agrees. Indeed, let us see the behavior of an inorganic being. It certainly does not lack some qualities: warmth, color, magnetism, etc.—the “sensible qualities”—the Scholastic calls them; “physical forces, cosmic forces”, say the moderns.

Thanks to these qualities, the inorganic substance can radiate, so to speak, around itself; it can communicate itself to the world surrounding it, modifying and transforming all that comes within its orbit. Far from being purely static and passive, it is an active, dynamic center. But it always acts in the same way, whatever may be the object of its action; always with the same intensity, one might almost say with the same ease. Its activity is always directed towards the exterior. It keeps nothing back, it dissipates its strength and wastes treasures of energy. It lacks foresight and prudence and has no consideration for anything. It does not even appear to wish to preserve its identity and integrity. One might say that its unique purpose is to spend itself as quickly and as completely as possible. Chemical affinities, in which one may see a kind of tendency of the inorganic world similar to the sentiments of love or hate which move us, as a rule only precipitate the destruction of the substance; by uniting itself to another being, it loses its individuality.

With its anonymous action thrown at random into space, it throws itself there bit by bit and achieves its own dispersion. That is why it seems to be less "individual" than a "particle" of that ensemble which is called the universe. Are we surprised that this obscure being has no genealogy, no personality; that it acts only for others, and that its condition somewhat resembles that of a slave? Its existence, being completely subordinate to its surroundings, is therefore entirely relative, which explains the indifference it displays with regard to its integrity. It never defends itself. If we try to divide it into several pieces it offers resistance that is sometimes difficult to overcome. But resistance is not defense. The passive resistance of the inorganic being is a blind resistance, without intention, without purpose, without foresight. It is simply a "play" of cosmic forces, insensible and indifferent as the inorganic bodies themselves, rolling across the universe without any apparent object, any governing motive. We call them "blind", and the term is correct. Indeed, if in their furious tornado they crush many beings, living or otherwise, it is not for the pleasure of killing; as to that, while demolishing they construct; *corruptio unius est generatio alterius*. But they are in no way concerned with the individual as such. An individual is for them a certain amount of physical force, nothing more. He may be a part of different compositions, subject to a certain analysis; that is of little importance. It is really a "play"; the play of cosmic forces which neither diminishes nor increases the richness of the world; the total amount of energy available remains always the same, only its form changes. To lessen or to increase anything, a superior power must intervene. Now "cosmic forces" or "the energy of the world" are only different names for one and the same thing.

Such is the conduct of inorganic bodies. Endowed with certain qualities which permit of their forming combinations with other bodies, they act and produce different results; they are not therefore purely passive, as certain philosophers like to believe. However, they never act for their own ends. They show no trace of "immanent finality": they seek nothing, repel nothing; everything is to them a matter of complete indifference.

When we so conceive of inorganic things, the idea of Evil becomes unintelligible. Evil is not simply a negation, a kind of limitation of being, but an obstacle which bars the way to perfection. It is a tenacious enemy that reduces, impoverishes, destroys. It is a "privation" rather than a negation; a kind of "veto" on the orders of immanent finality.⁵

8. We do not dream of excluding inorganic beings from the concept of finality. Indeed, we have just called attention to the fact that they are endowed with certain qualities that enable them constantly to enter into combination with other bodies, that they thus collaborate with the order that exists in the universe, maintain the harmony, and assure certain physical conditions necessary to the existence and to the development of life.

We know that Descartes, after having denied all finality in beings without intelligence, had to explain the order and the harmony of this world by a special intervention of God, by an initial impulse that God had impressed on matter. This first impulse, having as result the numerous shocks of bodies among themselves, their constant division into fragments and the infinitely changing variety of their relative positions in space, would be the unique cause of all the wonders

⁵ So, e.g., a tumor, considered in its physical reality, is as good as any other reality which exists in the world. It is only the disorder, more or less profound, which it introduces into our organism that is "bad". It is in this that the formal evil of the tumor consists.

of the universe. He thus wished to substitute an extrinsic finality for the intrinsic finality pre-existent in the beings themselves.

But this way of explaining Nature is far from satisfying. Indeed, material bodies are in no way passive, as Descartes supposed. On the contrary, they are the sources of real strength, of true effects; they are centers from which actions travel through space. Their changes of shape or structure do not come only from outside; there are also intrinsic transformations, as is shown in Cosmology. Moreover, they possess remarkable affinity for other bodies which constantly solicit them to stable and harmonious syntheses.

Certainly one cannot deny the influence of God on these numerous activities that He carries on all over the World. But they have not been started by a sort of mechanical impulse given once and for all at the moment of creation; it is a question of a continuous impulse which remains in each body under the form of its "nature".

Now the nature of a being is, in the order of real existence, identical with the essence of the being. Therefore the natural tendencies which manifest themselves under the form of "forces", "qualities", "capacities", to produce determined effects, really come from the essence of the inorganic beings. It is in this sense that we can speak of the "intrinsic finality" of inorganic beings.

This finality cannot, however, be compared with the finality which characterizes living beings. The following chapter will demonstrate this clearly. Here it suffices to note that the "finality" which we find in inorganic beings does not "complete", "finish", "perfect" them. Indeed, the individuality of the inorganic beings is, properly speaking, constituted by a molecule. Now we do not understand how a molecule, e.g., of water or of iron, could be perfected by its own activities. Can water, by its own efforts, change its habits of freezing at

32° of temperature, or of evaporating at 212°? Can the molecule of iron give itself another atomic weight or another specific color? Inorganic beings never take themselves as goals of their activities. They show no trace of "immanent finality". They remain profoundly indifferent to all that surrounds them. Everything is the same to them. Therefore the notion of Good loses any intelligible meaning. In the same way, Evil becomes impossible.

9. We see from this what we should think of the "metaphysical evil" of which some philosophers, in particular Campanella,⁶ Leibnitz,⁷ and today A. Ott,⁸ speak, who mean by

⁶ Metaphysical evil, said Campanella, has its birth in the non-being that limits all created things. Only God, being without limit, is free from all taint of non-being. On the contrary, all creatures, being limited, are thereby composed of being and non-being. Non-being manifests itself in the created thing as lack of power, ignorance, hatred, which, like non-being itself considered in its physical reality, do not exist. Metaphysical evil is permitted by God, who draws good from it. (*Universalis Philosophiae seu Metaphysicarum rerum, iuxta propria dogmata*, parte II, lib. VI, cap. 12, art. 1; cap. 15, art. 3; lib. X, cap. 4, 6, art. 2; cap. 7, art. 3; parte III, lib. XVIII, cap. 7, art. 2). Pomponatius also spoke of metaphysical evil, but he called it "the evil of nature", or *malum in latitudine entis*. It is always a question of the limitation of the creature. Thus the serpent which, in itself, is good, is bad for many other creatures. This evil is inherent in the finite being. It is on this kind of evil that the variety of creatures is founded. It is the work of God and the celestial bodies, or of Nature. Hence the name: evil of nature. It implies no injustice, either on the part of God or on that of the ferocious animals. God is an architect free to do what He wishes, who may well construct an edifice to destroy it afterwards (*velut ludus deorum*). The evil of nature is opposed to the evil of the species or of the individual (blindness for example). It is contrary to the intentions of nature. It has no cause *per se* but a cause *per accidens*; it has no efficient cause, but a deficient cause. One may explain in the same way the origin of all extraordinary effects, including Miracles; they are always natural effects, but incomplete, indeterminate; they show what nature can do, they are therefore great "monstra" in the true sense of the word.

⁷ Leibnitz allows of three species of evil: metaphysical evil, moral evil, and physical evil. Metaphysical evil, in its turn, can be either purely negative or privative. The first is an absolutely necessary property, for it is impossible that the creature should have the same auto-sufficiency as God; it is a necessary condition of the existence of creatures. It is nothing positive. It is pure negation, it is pure non-existence.

Metaphysical evil that is privative is, on the contrary, the lack of a good

that the limitation which characterizes all created things. Each one of us is free to use words he pleases: *verba sunt signa ad arbitrium*. Words by themselves are neither true nor false. For a word is not a judgment. Truth, like error, is found formally only in the judgment. However, there exist terminologies more or less convenient, more or less exact. There are some that it is better not to use, for they lend themselves to equivocation, to confusion. The expression "metaphysical evil" is precisely of the latter kind. It only helps to complicate the problem of evil, sufficiently complex in itself. It does this principally by creating many annoying misunderstandings. To have two eyes and not four is certainly a "limitation" of the human being. But who has ever thought of complaining of that? Who has ever considered that as his particular evil? Only madmen. It is a symptom of their disease, as common sense tells us.

This expression "metaphysical evil" can lead to disastrous errors in ethics, for it is susceptible to particularly dangerous suggestions for the conscience. For example, it can throw man into gloomy perplexity and scruples, into the rigorism which opens the door to despair. Indeed, if all reality—by the mere fact that it is finite, that it is limited, is "bad"—then all our actions, even the most perfect, even the most pious, would be "bad" because they are all finite and limited. And thus we are thrown into that moral pessimism that is so characteristic of the religion of Luther. We are reduced to despair.

10. But we cannot pass over in silence the theory which in modern times became particularly famous and was ac-

which is due to the monad; it is not absolutely necessary; it is only hypothetically and morally necessary. Negative metaphysical evil is not an efficient cause of moral evil, but only a necessary condition, insufficient in itself, of moral Evil.

⁸ A. Ott, *Le problème du mal* (Paris, 1888), pp. 23-28.

cepted with enthusiasm by many who take an interest in the problem of Evil. It is the theory of value, known more generally under the German name *Werttheorie*.

This theory is too well known for us to explain it here. Moreover, could we do this in so small a space? It has an enormous bibliography, due to Rudolf Lotze, Hugo Münsterberg, Eduard von Hartmann, William Stern, Heinrich Rickert, Max Scheler, Alexius Meinong, Br. Bauch, J. E. Heyde, O. Kraus, and many others. And this bibliography does not show any tendency to stop growing. Besides, the word "value" is today taken in a very broad sense. It includes not only Good, properly so called, but also Truth, Beauty, Sanctity. And one easily understands how certain authors could say that the principal, or even the unique, end of philosophy is to solve the problem of Value. This assertion will not astonish us if we consider that no other philosophical problem is so important as the problems mentioned just now.

What interests us most in the theory of value at this moment is the following question: How do we reach value? The defendants of this theory generally say that we do so by means of an immediate experience. They are not wrong. Indeed, it is not by a pure and simple deduction that man one day discovered the world of values, just as it is not by "reasoning" that we discover our own "ego". Reasoning can demonstrate the existence of an "ego", but it will never allow us to reach the intimacy, individuality, and incommunicability which characterize our own ego. Moreover, the notion "deduced" must be contained in the "premises". It is always "derivative". Now the notion of value appears to us as something primitive and fundamental.

But it is important that we explain the "experience" which makes us reach the values. It is beyond any doubt that there can be no question of a special cognitive faculty, anal-

ogous to the faculty by which we reach, e.g., colors, sounds and such. Value is not a particular quality which is to be found in things accidentally. It is sometimes identical with the essence of the things; certain things are "valuable" for their essential properties. Moreover, we could not understand a quality equally present in the most disparate things: spirit and matter, substance and accident, and so on. But all these things can have a "value"!

The most distinguished among the partisans of the theory of value seem to have felt these difficulties. It is for this reason that they generally speak of an "emotional" or "affective" experience. We can reach the value—they say—in so far as the object produces some affection in us. It is easily seen how this "theory of Value" comes near to the "theory of Good" which we have sketched above. Good, we said, does not coincide with Being. It essentially implies desire, an element of an affective order. If the modern partisans of "value" deny any connection with the old theory of Good, it is principally because, with Kant, they banish Being into the Hell of the Unknowable, or—and this with more logic—into the Hell of Nothingness. In such a supposition, value must, of course, be explained exclusively by a subjective affection. Many authors admit this conclusion. They define value as "that which is considered as such".

This theory reminds us of the famous saying of the Sophist Protagoras: πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος (man is the measure of all things).⁹ For this reason all the objections already made in antiquity against this saying are so many arguments against the theory of value we just mentioned. In particular, we can quote against it the existence of

⁹ See Diels, Vors. 74A 1, 51. The exact meaning of this saying is much discussed among the historians of philosophy. But one thing is certain: it expresses a subjectivism and a relativism. Protagoras will say: We do not know the outer world as it is, but only as it is perceived.

errors with regard to values. Indeed, if we acknowledge that we have made an error in the appreciation of some value, we recognize implicitly the existence of some criteria which are not purely subjective.

The Neo-Kantian School of Baden (Wilhelm Windelband, Heinrich Rickert, and so on) admits value as a postulate of the practical reason. That is to say, value depends more upon faith than upon science. This theory stands and falls with the system of Kant. Moreover it leads logically to the preceding theory, since the last consequence of Kantianism is Subjectivism.

The Phenomenological School of Scheler, wishing at any cost to save the objectivity of the values, admits two orders quite different from one another: the order of being and that of value. The former is the object of metaphysics, the latter is that of experience (of emotion). These two orders have no other point of connection than the human being in which they coexist. The insufficiency of this theory has been seen even by Scheler himself. The dualism which it introduces into man is far from satisfying the mind which everywhere tries to unite, to form a synthesis.

For us, "value" is identical with "good". The preceding pages have shown us how the objectivity of value can agree with the subjective desire which is included in the notion of good, and how we can speak of an "absolute value". Value exists not only for man but also for animals and vegetables. Indeed, in their whole conduct, animals manifest attachments and preferences: they love certain things, they seek after them. They attain, then, in some way, to value. We must say almost the same thing of vegetables. Indeed, they are not indifferent as to their existence; on the contrary, they work in order to conserve and to develop it.

Certainly, values in the three realms of being are not

homogeneous. They are analogous in the same proportion in which Being is analogous, which constitutes the foundation of value. We can go further, and say that even the human values are not all identical, one with another. They are disposed in an hierarchical plan which corresponds exactly to the plan of the organization of the human being, or, as the ancients used to say, to human faculties.¹⁰

¹⁰ See P. Siwek, S. J., *Le problème de la valeur*, Travaux du IX^e Congrès Intern. de Philos. t. XI (Paris, 1937), pp. 83-90.

2

EVIL IN THE ORGANIC WORLD

1. Evil is not simply non-being nor the negation of some good. It is a "privation". It is not in opposition to all finality but to "immanent finality". That is the conclusion we have reached. But this conclusion is still too general. We must endeavor to make the meaning more exact.

2. For this purpose we will now turn our thoughts to living beings, beginning with those which occupy the lowest rung on the ladder of life and are the nearest to the inorganic of which we have just been speaking. Let us consider the vegetables. Their behavior differs essentially from that of inorganic beings. Indeed, what foresight, what prudence, is expressed in all their actions! They are careful, one might say, to maintain their own individuality, to preserve, develop, and enrich it. Instead of only reaching out to the exterior world, giving it all their riches, all their latent strength, they concentrate on themselves, they hoard, they heap up treasures.

This is obvious even in vegetables of the humblest type. They thrust their roots into the earth to find water and nourishment; they stretch out their leaves impregnated with chlorophyll into the air to collect carbonic gas. Then, having decomposed it into its original elements, they return the oxygen to the surrounding air, but retain for their own particular use the precious carbon from which all their organs and tissues are formed. It is in this way that plants are "fed". This

action, it is well known, is not continual but periodic, because it necessarily requires the assistance of energy from the light of the sun. It is for this reason that it is interrupted at night and even in the shade.

But the food in the vegetable must not remain useless. The vegetable does not gather for the pleasure of gathering, as do misers who accumulate money for the pleasure of accumulation. The food acquired by the vegetable is transformed by it into a dynamic force, into the fire of life. And this transformation takes place by means of "respiration". Vegetables no less than animals "breathe"; they absorb from the atmosphere oxygen ¹ which, put into direct contact with the carbon brought in by "nutrition", produces various oxidations or "combustions".² The poetical expression "the light of life" has scientific exactitude here. And this light

¹ In the absence of this gas, the vegetable dies, even if it has plenty of the "carbonic acid" which, as we said before, constitutes its principal food.

² The most ancient thinkers had already observed that animals generally possess a higher temperature than surrounding bodies. Where did this extra heat peculiar to animals come from? From the sun? But the rays of the sun reach all objects in Nature equally; they could not have any preference. It was in this way that man was from antiquity led to suppose that a process of combustion took place in the organism. To explain it, different theories were advanced, of which we find echoes in the works of Greek antiquity. Modern science has given certitude to this vague intuition of the ancients. Organic life implies multiple "combustion". The living organism from birth to death burns without ceasing, as does the fire in the stove. When this heat is extinguished, it dies. This is true of all living organisms without exception. However, the difference between their temperature and that of their surroundings is not always easy to ascertain. Trees, for example, because of the enormous surface of their built-up organism and the great quantity of water that it contains, instantly lose their internal heat in all parts that are in direct contact with the air.

During the blooming period the extra temperature just mentioned can be easily observed by touching the various parts of a plant with the hand.

In certain plants, notably in certain mushrooms, respiration can be accompanied by phosphorescence. The light without heat which is emitted then is due to the combustion in the plant. It is for this reason that this phenomenon disappears as soon as we put the plant into a noncombustible atmosphere, in the azote for example (or in the void).

must be kept up, without interruption, through the whole life. By night and day, the plant breathes. The result of this respiration is then rejected by the plant in the form of "carbonic acid".

The way in which the roots of plants draw food from the soil is not less marvelous. This is really one of the most perfect laboratories. The greatest scholars look at it with admiration. We must say the same about the structure of orchids. How perfect an adaptation they manifest in every particular to the visits of insects which carry the pollen. Darwin, who studied them profoundly, found it "marvelous". "How marvelous the harmony", he used to repeat.³ The pages written by him on this subject are classic.

But it is not enough to obtain nourishment; the nourishment must also be distributed throughout the whole organism, even to its innermost recesses. For this the vegetables must conquer the worst enemy of living beings, the inertia of matter which leads them to immutable equilibrium, in fact, to death, since an organism is only alive so long as it "acts". This must at all costs be conquered. How do the vegetables do it? By direct attack? That would not be good for them, for inertia is, after all, the principal law of cosmic forces and of the order and harmony which it regulates. The vegetable is far too clever for that; we can see that it quietly uses inertia for its own advantage! To this end it uses various and very complicated engines; and as it is a question of reaching the very bottom of the organism, it is in the depths of its structure that we find them. Thanks to these very ingenious engines which we will simply call "organs", it obliges the weight to work for it. What is still more remarkable is that nothing is accomplished in the organism, in spite of all ap-

³ Ch. Darwin, *De la fécondation des orchidées*, trad. franç. (Paris, 1891), p. 51.

pearances to the contrary, which is in opposition to the laws of inorganic nature. It is these very laws which preside over the carrying out of all the marvelous techniques. Only the initiation of the work emanates from the organism.

And this initiation is full of marvels. Here is, for example, what R. H. Francé says about it: "We are in the center of the Incomprehensible. Indeed, this is the most mysterious of botanical and biotechnical sciences. The human mind was occupied with it during the last century. We have not yet succeeded in resolving it. All we can do is to describe it".⁴ "Every tree on the roadside hides an invention which man has not been able to realize; its leaves and branches whisper that there are things of which our knowledge does not dream".⁵ How many theories have been presented in order to explain the way in which the plant causes water to ascend from the roots to the leaves which are often so high above them. The pumps which the plants invented for this purpose, at the very beginning of their existence, have always been especially admired. What simplicity and perfection they possess!

But the living being gives us still other manifestations of immanent finality. It must, as we have seen before, unceasingly maintain the light of life. To interrupt this function would lead to suffocation and to death. But is there any organism that ever finds itself protected from all crises in nourishment, that is never faced with the momentary impossibility of procuring the nourishment necessary to its existence? To ward off this danger, the organism utilizes different ways of storing reserves of food. Fats, accumulated in the different tissues of living beings, offer a classic example of this salutary way of supplying provisions.

⁴ R. H. Francé, *The Love-life of Plants* (New York, 1923), p. 56.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

The manner in which the organism deals out the treasure thus acquired is another proof of astonishing foresight, of immanent finality. All the organs are necessary to the organism, but not all to the same degree. It can dispense with some fairly easily, while others are indispensable. And the organism takes account of this hierarchy of values in its organs. In its moments of forced leisure it arranges in a masterful manner for the preservation of the organs that are indispensable for its existence. (Anatomy shows that the brain and the heart are the last to be injured by famine.)

We have seen that when an inorganic body is attacked, it offers no defense. The living being acts very differently; it immediately organizes a system of defense in which even those parts that are apparently the least threatened take their share. For instance, if any organ is attacked by a poison, the others set to work to contrive an antitoxin which will be carried to the infected parts. Was it not after the model of this particular faculty of the organism that the ingenious practice of vaccination was invented by Jenner and Pasteur? Their fame does not consist in having created a method but in having known enough to discover it in the living organisms.

If the conditions of the place in which the organism lives suddenly undergo a considerable change, it at once adapts itself to the new conditions: its osmotic pressure, its breathing, its exterior development are changed. Numerous observations collected by the biologists on this point are too well known to need development: physiological reflexes and various kinds of tropisms are included in this category of vital, active adaptations.

But we must not pass over in silence one instance where this defense of which we are speaking takes a particularly striking form—the phenomena of regeneration. A wounded organism possesses, to a certain extent, the possibility of re-

generating itself, that is to say, of partially re-creating itself. If you injure a tree by depriving it of some of its branches, the seminal cells scattered over the whole surface of the trunk, which in normal conditions remain inactive, become active to form perfect branches, as if they wished to substitute themselves for those that had been amputated. In the same way, in several animals, for example, the tabularia, the hydropolypus, and the triton taeniatus, we see important organs, the head, for instance, grow again after amputation, and that in a short time. Several biologists have succeeded in multiplying an animal simply by dividing the embryonic germ. Thus, the *clavellina lepadiformis*, if divided into two, gives two perfect individuals of the same species. What is remarkable here is the way in which the two separate parts act. At first they lose their own form and remain for some time in an amorphous condition—that is the potential stage; then, suddenly, they begin to form themselves into perfect and independent individuals.

That is the conduct of the living being. Unlike the inorganic being, it works for itself. It finds a way to make everything serve its purpose; it succeeds in establishing a kind of “empire” over the inorganic. It enjoys a certain autonomy, it creates a small world in a larger one. From it an impetus goes forth unceasingly that moves the cosmic forces, impresses on them an urge, a direction, an order, a plan, that Nature without it would never have invented. The living being is thus the creator of the most remarkable and the most perfect works in the natural order. But these works are still living beings. In this sense the organism is essentially selfish; when it works to perpetuate its species and to assure its immortality, it is still of itself that it thinks. In its sons and in its grandsons it will re-live.

Such are, broadly speaking, the characteristics of "immanent finality", so far as it affects the inferior grades of being. And this is going to enable us to understand better the full meaning of Evil.

3. But before passing on to this question it will be well to cast a glance at the theory which boasts of its ability to explain all the phenomena of life without any appeal to finality. That is to say, the "mechanical theory of life".

Descartes comes to our mind at once when we mention this theory. It was he who first gave it a systematic philosophical form. All the phenomena of vegetative life⁶—he says—take place mechanically. They are only an effect of the structure proper to the living being,⁷ and in particular of the "natural warmth" maintained by the blood in the veins.⁸ If this warmth disappears, death inevitably follows.⁹ The living body differs from a corpse in precisely the same way as "a watch wound up" differs from the same watch "when it is broken".¹⁰ "The sole cause of all the movements of members, as has been said before, is this: some muscles contract and the opposing muscles lengthen. And the only cause of the contraction of one muscle rather than of the other is that there flows into it from the brain more animal spirits".¹¹

The "animal spirits" which thus come from the brain are not yet sufficient to move these muscles; nevertheless they cause the other spirits, which are already in these muscles, to move quickly out of one and pass into another. By this maneuver the muscle that lost the animal spirits becomes longer

⁶ The theories of the biological mechanists of antiquity were very embryonic.

⁷ *Traité de l'homme*, t. XI, p. 120; *Les passions de l'âme*, art. III, t. XI, p. 329; art. IV, p. 329; art. V, p. 330.

⁸ *Les passions de l'âme*, art. VIII, p. 333; art. V, p. 330.

⁹ *Ibid.*, art. V, p. 330; art. VI, p. 330.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, art. V, pp. 330-336.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, art. XI, pp. 335-336.

and more relaxed, and the one which gains them contracts and pulls back the limb to which it is attached.¹² "Animal spirits" are extremely small bodies, endowed with very rapid movements.¹³ They are a type of "subtle wind", or better yet, a kind of very pure flame¹⁴ which is extremely active and is produced in the brain by the blood circulating there.¹⁵ Those who entertain doubts as to how a machine can exercise such admirable and vital movements forget that it is a machine made by God. God is quite capable of making machines more perfect than our watches, artificial fountains, windmills, and so on.¹⁶

The weakness of Descartes' theory is obvious. In fact, according to the supporters of this theory, the structure cannot affect the ultimate nature of the elements of which it is composed, and therefore the conduct of each of these must remain essentially the same, whatever may be the arrangement in which it participates. It follows that certain actions that we have already described remain inexplicable. For example, how could one explain the phenomenon of regeneration, so important in organic life? A machine cannot regenerate itself; quite the contrary, it wears itself out. On the other hand, how is it that from an egg, which normally gives birth to only one creature, one may sometimes by a simple division bring forth several?

Could we conceive of a machine the peculiar efficiency of which lay either in its entirety or in any one of its parts? Can we say that in each part of the living being there exists complete and distinct individualities which, under normal conditions, do not all attain their full development? If so, how shall we represent to ourselves the connection that

¹² *Ibid.*, art. X, pp. 335-336.

¹³ *Ibid.*, art. X, p. 334.

¹⁴ *Traité de l'homme*, t. XI, p. 129.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, t. XI, p. 120; *Discours de la méthode*, t. VI, p. 56.

might unite these hidden individualities to the one individual that is manifest? Moreover, if we wish to be consistent, we must admit that in this case the structure of each individual that attains its full development is already formed in the germ (on an extremely small scale!). It is essential to admit this postulate if one wishes to maintain the argument according to which all the vital operations depend solely on their composition, including those which while still in a latent state already tend towards forming the organic structure that we see in the completed being. But who could ever solve the innumerable difficulties raised by such a postulate? It is these difficulties that have definitely discredited the theory of "involution" in biology. It is a very bad plan to begin again on a road that obviously leads nowhere.

The theory that explains vital functions by the arrangement of the organs, by their organization, has also been refuted by experience: the organism changes progressively into different precise forms and starts from an amorphous germ. That is a fact of which we must never lose sight. The numerous observations with regard to vital functions which have recently been collected in biological laboratories tend to prove the same point. They clearly prove how illusory the mechanical theory of life was in its classical form. The most advanced partisans of this theory are the first to admit this fact. Hans Driesch, says Jules Schultz, "has demolished once and for all the old form of biological mechanism".¹⁷ This is true, he adds, not only for the theory of Descartes but also for those of Nägeli, Weismann, Verworn, and Stöhr; it holds good for every theory that puts the "machine" in the living body itself.¹⁸ In order to maintain biological mechanism one

¹⁷ Julius Schultz, *Die Maschinentheorie des Lebens*, II Aufl. (Leipzig, Felix Meiner, 1929), p. 67.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 67. Cf. also Erwin Ditz, *Julius Schultz' Maschinentheorie des Lebens* (Leipzig, S. Hirzel, 1935), p. 24.

must put the "vital machine" in the "biogene".¹⁹ "The vital machine is not, properly speaking, either animal, plant, protozoon, or even bacteria; it stands at an equal distance, on the one hand, from the smallest living being, and on the other, from the largest molecule. In itself it is not a living being; it is the element whence living beings are constructed".²⁰

These "little machines"—the biogenes—are endowed with the capacity to multiply themselves by division. But they are not immortal. Quite the contrary. Under certain conditions they often perish in great numbers by a profound destruction of their organization, especially by a violent division. If their number always remains almost the same, however, this is because the death of some²¹ is compensated for by the production of others. We must, in fact, suppose that the number of the biogenes hurled into empty space by the bursting of a planet is exactly equal to the number that once fell on the planet from empty space.²²

In intersidereal space the number of biogenes remains unchanged. It is only when they fall on a planet with favorable conditions—water, heat, etc.—that they begin to multiply, to divide, and to give birth to the first living beings.²³ The biogene can no more be spontaneously generated than can a living being. For spontaneous generation is the work of chance; it is the apparition of a well-ordered reality from sheer chaos.²⁴ The biogene can come only from an-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34. He borrowed the term from Max Verworn and gave it a new meaning. For Verworn the biogene was a very complicated molecule; it could, under certain conditions, be produced chemically. Cf. Max Verworn, *Die Biogenhypothese*.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 67. Cf. Erwin Ditz, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

²¹ "Death" here should be taken metaphorically. Not being "alive" formally, the biogene cannot "die". It is a question here of destruction, pure and simple.

²² J. Schultz, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 126.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

other biogene, as one living being can come only from another.²⁵

What is their first origin? Schultz replies that science has no power to tell us this. This question is beyond the reach of its means of investigation. Science should limit itself to describing the nature and the function of the biogene. The problem of its first beginning is a philosophic problem—eminently so. To solve it one must consider the whole of reality, the universe. The universe appears to us to be a “precise machine” (*Präzisionsmaschine*) which has been in existence for eternity.²⁶ Everything in it, down to the last particle, is ordered.²⁷ Now the biogenes are just tiny “particles” of the great machine of the universe. They, too, exist from eternity.²⁸ Moreover, several species of them must have always existed, though we cannot determine the exact number of these.²⁹

In order to protect the biogene from the criticism leveled against it by contemporary critics of biological mechanism, Schultz is anxious to attribute to it the most marvelous powers. These powers are not proved.³⁰ They are simple postulates. E. Ditz has found seven of them in Schultz’ work.³¹ But that does not seem so important to us as does the fact that Schultz’ theory is far from having scientific exactness. Schultz does not deny this. He expressly declares that his theory is not an established “truth”, not even, strictly speak-

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31. Nevertheless, in a letter to Erwin Ditz, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37, Schultz says that if we knew how to make enough artificial biogenes and to give them an appropriate milieu (liquid nourishment), we could obtain a living amoeba.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 50.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 35, 36.

²⁹ Schultz recommends here “scientific tact”.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 67-68.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-33.

ing, "probable".³² Its only claim is that it gives a list of the conditions necessary to explain the admirable "convergence" that living beings show in their effort to conserve, or to re-establish, their organic form.³³ But the attempt, let us hasten to add, is made to explain this in purely mechanical terms, that is to say, solely by the physical and chemical forces of attraction and repulsion, such as the principle of the conservation of energy³⁴ demands,³⁵ according to Schultz.

We have Schultz' word for it that his theory contains only "theorems".³⁶ He also calls it a "fiction".³⁷ Its sole function is to show us how we can conceive life without recourse to that mysterious *vis vitalis*, which itself is a fiction, never having been scientifically proved.³⁸

We cannot here attempt any detailed discussion of the theory the great lines of which we have sketched. We shall limit ourselves to several remarks. The theory of Schultz is a "fiction". We have mentioned this before. However, it is not any type of fiction, not, for example, a poetic fiction. It is a scientific fiction of which there is question here, since it is supposed to furnish us with an "explanation" of life that satisfies all the demands of reason. It is therefore a philosophic hypothesis.³⁹ In fact, the famous controversy between Vitalism and Mechanism has its origin in philosophy and not

³² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 41. It is in this, according to Schultz, that life consists (*ibid.*, pp. 1-5).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5, 17-19.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-20.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³⁷ The notion of "fiction" is explained by Schultz in the work entitled *Die Grundfiktionen der Biologie*, published by Schaxel, Berlin, 1920. See also Hans Vaihinger, *Die Philosophie des Als-Ob*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 6, 10.

³⁹ If Schultz himself does not use the word "hypothesis", it is because he reserves this word for some idea that we accept provisionally in order to coordinate our scientific research ("Arbeitshypothese", "heuristische Hypothese").

from science. Schultz himself underlines this point energetically in his book.⁴⁰

The solution which Schultz offers to this controversy is obviously inspired by the metaphysics of Leibnitz and of Spinoza. It is, in a sense, an attempt at a synthesis of these two philosophic systems. In fact, the biogene, as we have described it above, recalls to our minds in some ways the monad of Leibnitz. But when the question arises as to its ultimate origin, Schultz admits a Spinozistic solution. The biogene, far from being created by God, is an integral part of the cosmos, eternal, necessary, and infinite. All that exists in our world of experience is only 'a manifestation of this Great Being.

Let us continue. Material facts, according to Schultz, must be explained by "material" causes only. Psychophysical activity must be rejected in toto as unintelligible in itself and contrary to the supreme principle of Thought. Schultz is in agreement with Spinoza here too. It is well known how much Spinoza insisted upon homogeneity of agent and patient, of cause and effect. A "mode" of Extension depends upon another mode of Extension, and so on to infinity. The situation is the same with the "modes" of Thought. Causality is possible only within the interior of each series. A mode of Extension can never exert influence upon a mode of Thought, nor can the opposite occur. Schultz admits this argument. If, however, he appeals above all to the "principle of conservation of energy", it is because this principle is closely linked to the Monism of Substance. Substance—absolutely necessary by hypothesis—can obviously neither lose nor gain anything. The principle of conservation of energy, according to Schultz, is not an experimental principle. It is a rational prin-

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

ciple.⁴¹ Thus it has, according to him, an absolute value. That is why any assertion which would be in contradiction with this "supreme principle", this "sacred principle" (*heiliges Prinzip*),⁴² seems to him refuted by that very fact. It is this argument, according to him, that is the strongest against Vitalism. Vitalism does not accord with this principle.

In the "absolutely infinite" Substance of Spinoza there is no place for finality. For finality is incomprehensible without some liberty, properly so called. But the Substance of Spinoza is subject to the most rigorous necessity conceivable. Now Schultz' great machine of the universe bears a singular resemblance to Spinoza's Substance. Schultz definitely denies any idea of finality in the world in general and in living beings in particular. It is true, he says, that the phenomena of life have a meaning, a "significance" (*Sinn*).⁴³ But this meaning has not been intended by the Universe. And that suffices to cast out any idea of finality. The meaning that is revealed by material phenomena is to be explained philosophically by the radical identity of Matter and Spirit. "What appears to us", Schultz says, "in our interior life as sensation, memory, and volition are for the senses of touch and of sight (if only these senses could attain such depths!) simple processes of the brain".⁴⁴ On the other hand, "every organic form—including our own—should be conceived as a phenomenon of a soul, or, at least, of something psychic".⁴⁵ And so, in place of finality we should use the word "convergence", thanks to which living beings maintain or re-establish their typical forms (*Typovergenz*).⁴⁶

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4. "It is the re-establishment and the conservation of the organic form which constitutes the very essence of life" (*ibid.*, p. 4).

What we have just stated makes it clear that the denial of finality in Schultz' mechanical theory of life is due to the metaphysics it is based on. It has nothing to do with Schultz' biological research. In order to re-establish finality in the world, we must, then, attack the thesis which Schultz has borrowed directly or indirectly, it makes little difference, from Spinoza. But we have spoken of this sufficiently in other works to obviate that need here.⁴⁷ Finality, in the organic world, has not been refuted by those who hold a mechanical theory of life. It has simply been sacrificed to the idol of certain preconceived ideas of metaphysical order.

But with finality (which we have demonstrated above), Evil in the organic world reappears in all its force.

4. Evil, we have said, is all that opposes the intrinsic finality of a being. Therefore it is all that hinders the being's full development, all that thwarts its tendencies, all that resists the drive from the depths of that being towards its full expansion, towards that completion which it would attain to in its ideal type, the archetype of its own nature.

Spinoza, wishing to abolish all idea of Good and Evil, began by attacking the ultimate cause and endeavored first of all to get rid of the illusion of the universal. Spinoza was perspicacious. There certainly exists between these three ideas, Good and Evil, finality, and the universal, a strict relation: Good and Evil cannot be understood without finality, and the idea of finality, in its turn, necessarily presupposes the existence of an ideal type, of that archetype which the specific nature of the being implies or which is implied in the "universal" of this nature.

⁴⁷ Above all, in our studies *L'âme et le corps d'après Spinoza* (Paris, Alcan, 1930), and *Spinoza et le panthéisme religieux* (Paris, Desclée De Brouwer, 1950, and especially *Au coeur du Spinozisme*, chap. II (now being printed).

In short, Good is that which promotes immanent finality, Evil is that which opposes it. But finality is strictly proportioned to the nature of this being, conceived as ideal, abstract, universal. It is by realizing this ideal nature that the individual being will reach its own achievement, its own perfection. Now the idea of perfection makes sense only when applied to living beings, for "perfection" means that which is carried to its completion, and only living beings can be so carried, for they do not receive from nature an unchangeable, definite, and rigid form as inorganic beings do. On the contrary, they appear in the world in a form that is embryonic, unfinished, and incomplete.⁴⁸ It is by their own efforts, their own activity, that they are to develop form, to complete it, to perfect it. If these efforts are successful, the living being attains perfection; if not, it remains imperfect, that is to say, arrested on the way to its realization. For the inorganic being, the words "perfect" and "imperfect" have, strictly speaking, no meaning. The inorganic is what it ought to be or it does not exist. Iron cannot be more or less than iron; it attains its specific perfection immediately because it does not have to cooperate for this attainment. That would be impossible, for it is incapable of an immanent operation.

To conclude the idea of perfection, as it exists for living, created beings, let us hasten to add that it cannot apply to the essence of being. For the essence has no graduation: *stat in indivisibili; non admittit plus et minus*. Indeed, if we add anything whatever to the essence of a being, we no longer have the same being. It is in this sense that Scholastic philosophers speak of the "immutability"

⁴⁸ It is incomplete so far as it refers to the accidental or derived properties, not in its essential and specific characteristics.

of essences, of their "indivisibility", "eternity",⁴⁹ "necessity".⁵⁰

Just as we cannot—without contradiction—add a fourth side to the triangle, so we cannot add anything to the metaphysical essences of things nor subtract anything from them. In fact, is it possible to represent to oneself the "essence of man", while cutting off the note of "rationality"? On this very point, essences bear a singular resemblance to numbers. If we add one to a number, we are then dealing with a wholly different number. The analogy between numbers and essences is so striking that it has led many thinkers of antiquity to consider essences as numbers.

Perfection, in the full sense of the word, only applies to the more or less accidental properties; properties which, without sharing in the essence of the being, are nevertheless its normal expansion and a kind of prolongation. As soon as one or the other of these properties fails, the individual does not necessarily cease to exist, but his existence becomes precarious; he suffers from an Evil. Thus Evil does not reside in the essence but only in the derived or accidental properties of the living being. Evil only deprives us of a certain accidental property. Thus it is obvious that any philosophy that denies any categorical difference between the essence and the derived properties is powerless before the problem of Evil.

We always return to the conclusion that we stated before: Evil is not a being, it is a disturbance from which the being suffers, a disruption of its harmony, an exhaustion in the face of its destiny. It is therefore relative, and the same thing may

⁴⁹ Since they are abstracted from time, the metaphysical essences of things, by that fact, are abstracted also from the length of their duration, from their end. An eternity which is wholly negative!

⁵⁰ There is no question here of a necessity of existence, but only of a necessity of intelligibility! That necessity consists in that the essence must always be conceived by means of the same characteristic notes.

sometimes be called good, sometimes bad. Violent sport may be profitable for a strong body and bad for a weak one.⁵¹ Let us bear in mind this conclusion. It will be very useful to us a little later on, for it will allow us to dismiss several apparent contradictions to which the problem of Evil gives rise. That which in the inferior plane of being is reputed an Evil, may in the superior plane be considered good. Thanks to this way of looking at things, one may often eliminate many evils.

⁵¹ The distinction found in certain modern Scholastic philosophers between absolute and relative Evil has quite another meaning. It coincides with the famous distinction used by ancient authors between *malum simpliciter* and *malum secundum quid*. For example, if man lacks eyes, that privation would be called a *malum absolutum*. The microbes which infest him would be a *malum relativum*. As these examples show, absolute Evil is the privation of some good considered in itself. Relative Evil is a thing which, though good in itself, is not fitting to a determined being. It is in this sense that a judge who punishes a criminal is considered the criminal's "Evil".

3

ONTOLOGICAL EVIL

1. What we have said in the preceding chapter shows clearly that consideration of mechanical causes alone does not suffice to explain vital functions. One must admit besides them some *intentionem*, some directing idea, which orientates the mechanical forces towards certain definite ends. But such an intention, such a directing idea, must be found within the living body because it is the living body itself which is the source of the vital operations.

2. How, then, shall we conceive these intentions, these ideas? Are they identical with those that direct the artist, the sculptor, for example, in the execution of his works? Some men are of this opinion. Organic functions, the living body's nutrition, repair, growth, etc., would then be the effect of certain psychic acts. The life of plants would not be radically different from that of animals; moreover, the life of plants would not differ essentially from our own lives.¹

To convince us of this view, those who hold this opinion invite us to consider more closely the vital operations of plants.

Let us start with growth. It is well known that growth takes place towards the spot where there is moisture. This conduct of plants is called "hygrotropism".² But some see in

¹ "... the life of plants is one with that of animals, and with that of ourselves. . . . Their sense life is a primitive form, the beginning of the human soul." (R. H. Francé, *Germes of Mind in Plants*, translated by A. M., Chicago, Charles H. Kerr, 1907, p. 139. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-62.)

² R. H. Francé, *Germes of Mind in Plants*, ed. cit., p. 24.

this activity a true sense activity: the plant directs itself towards moisture because it senses moisture. This sense of moisture would be localized at the root tips.

But the root of a plant also manifests another tendency: it is constantly carried downward. This tendency is today called "geotropism", and it is attributed to the attraction that the force of gravitation exerts on the root. The same influence makes the plant tend to grow upwards. This theory, say the Psychovitalists, neglects a most important element: the prudence of which the plant gives proof in all its operations. In fact, if the root meets some obstacle in its path, it does not attack it frontally, for this would be disastrous for it! It turns around and grows quickly to avoid the dangerous spot as soon as possible. Such a procedure cannot be explained by exterior forces; it comes from within; it is evidence of prudence. Moreover it would be difficult to understand how the same exterior force could push the plant in two different directions at once: the root downwards, the branches upwards. To explain all these phenomena conveniently we must admit a true sense, the static sense.³

Besides the static sense, say the Psychovitalists, we must also admit the sense of touch in plants. Otherwise we cannot explain the sometimes very energetic reactions that we get from plants when we touch their leaves or flowers. Here they mention *Mimosa pudica*, the small oxalis (*Biophytyn*), and a great many carnivorous plants (*Drosera rotundifolia*, etc.); as soon as an insect touches certain parts of these

³ See R. H. Francé, *Das Pflanzenleben Deutschlands und seiner Nachbarländer*, Band I, II Aufl. 1921, Stuttgart, pp. 172-184; Band II, 1907, pp. 411, 417-418; *Das Leben der Pflanze*, II Abteil: *Florische Lebensbilder*, Band II, Stuttgart, p. 138; *Germes of Mind in Plants*, 1907, p. 72. Adolf Wagner, *Repetitorium der allgemeinen Botanik* (Leipzig, 1915), p. 113. August Pütter, *Vergleichende Physiologie* (Jena, 1911), pp. 596-597.

plants they fold up and hold the imprudent visitor captive.⁴

Certain Psychovitalists also speak of a sense of light, of eyes, in plants. These they find in the leaves and flowers which turn towards the sun. These eyes are particularly good in young leaves, for they are able to perceive ultraviolet and ultrared rays.⁵

If we are to believe certain Psychovitalists, the sense of smell is not entirely foreign to plants. Certain parasite plants are said to possess it to an eminent degree. Recognizing the slightest trace of their victim's odor, they will chase directly after it, vanquishing all obstacles.⁶

Finally, some authors go so far as to attribute taste to plants. It must be especially delicate in certain bacteria that with avidity rush to their "favorite food"—potassium salts.

But the Psychovitalists tell us that the senses are not the only psychic faculties with which plants are endowed. Plants also possess the "faculty of judgment", "imagination", "association of images", "memory", "will", "the perception of space and time".⁷ They are sensitive to injury, and have a deep sense of gratitude.⁸ Just like men, they have individual and social instincts.⁹ Finally, like all men and animals, they are subject to sleep.¹⁰

⁴ Adolf Wagner, *Repetitorium der allgemeinen Botanik* (Leipzig, 1915), p. 113. August Pütter, *Vergleichende Physiologie* (Jena, 1911), pp. 586-591. R. H. Francé, *Germes of Mind in Plants* (1907), pp. 32-49.

⁵ W. Pfeffer, *The Physiology of Plants*, 2d ed., vol. II (Oxford, 1903), p. 105. Ad. Wagner, *op. cit.*, p. 113. R. H. Francé, *Germes of Mind in Plants* (1907), pp. 63-69, 82-90.

⁶ R. H. Francé, *Germes of Mind in Plants* (1907), p. 52.

⁷ Adolf Wagner, *Vorlesungen über vergleichende Tier- und Pflanzenkunde* (Leipzig, 1912), pp. 389-472. R. H. Francé, *Das Pflanzenleben Deutschlands und seiner Nachbarländer*, Band II (Stuttgart, 1907), pp. 415, 423-452.

⁸ R. H. Francé, *Germes of Mind in Plants*, *ed. cit.*, p. 20.

⁹ R. H. Francé, *The Love-life of Plants* (New York, 1923), p. 58; *Das Pflanzenleben Deutschlands und seiner Nachbarländer*, Band I, II Aufl., 1921 (Stuttgart), pp. 386-415.

¹⁰ R. H. Francé, *Germes of Mind in Plants*, *ed. cit.*, pp. 29-32.

That is, in rough outline, the psychovitalist or psychobiological theory. It must be mentioned because it raises the problem of Evil to a crisis.

In fact, if plants are endowed with sense life, how much atrocious suffering they must continually endure. Each time that we walk in a sunlit meadow, that we pick flowers for bouquets, that we cut wheat for food, cut down trees for furniture or for burning in our homes, what frightful tortures we must then afflict upon the poor plants! Then the problem of Evil really becomes a scandal. For the vegetables rooted in the earth cannot escape from an evil that they must suffer, so their suffering will be marked by that despair which is the characteristic of damnation. And it would be very difficult to discover any reasons that could justify the torture of beings that have no sins to expiate and for whom suffering cannot procure either merit or virtue.

Before resigning ourselves to that fatal conclusion, let us first see if the premises whence it is drawn are irreproachable.

The first obstacle to this view is that we do not possess any consciousness of psychic acts in our purely organic functions. Nutrition, for example, is accomplished in us without our having the slightest experimental knowledge of its process, and we may say the same of the different procedures by which, through numerous metamorphoses, the human embryo develops into its definite form. No one is aware of the obscure and infallible guidance which instigates and determines such transformations. The consciousness, the "I", not only does not direct them, but also often ignores them entirely. If the individual acquires some partial knowledge of them, it is not by means of his own consciousness but from the observations made by physiologists. All that we know of enzymes, of leucocytes, etc., we owe to the research of physiologists and not to our own consciousness.

Now if the vital functions of our organism act entirely unknown to us, why should it be otherwise with vegetables? Are those organisms more perfect, more complicated than ours? No one would dream of making such an assertion.

Undoubtedly the psychic life of man is not without influence on his organic functions. The instruments used in psychological experiments, sphygmograph, pneumatograph, ergograph, dynamograph, plethysmograph, automatograph, dynamometer, and other apparatus of this kind, clearly reveal this fact. Pleasure, for example, stimulates the vital functions of the organism, while pain diminishes them. When pleasure reaches a high degree, a quickening of the breath and a slackening of the pulse are very noticeable. Suffering, on the other hand, produces a rapid pulse and slow, deep breathing. Ideas and images have an analogous influence on the organic functions. When we think of the swift motion of a race horse, the automatograph records the same movement of expansion in our organism as that which pleasure causes. "Thought reading", a practice known under the name of Cumberlandism, involves, we know, the influence of thought on the organism. This experimental method explains many phenomena that ignorance and superstition have attributed to the intervention of spirits, ghosts.

But why multiply examples when these may be found in abundance in works on this subject? ¹¹ Let us rather see what we can draw from them in favor of the theory according to which some psychic acts would produce the immanent finality of the organism. We find nothing. Indeed, it is not by means of knowledge, as such, that these psychic acts influence the organic functions, but through the intermediary of

¹¹ We have treated these phenomena at length in our *Psicologia Experimental* as well as in our study, *Konnersreuth w swietle nauki i religii* (Konnersreuth in the Light of Science and Religion) (Cracow, 1931), and *Une stigmatisée de nos jours* (Paris, Lethielleux, 1950).

the material movements with which we see them accompanied in the organism. The subject usually ignores these physical manifestations and even if he does notice them he feels sure that they are not ordered by his spirit, that he is not an actor but only a spectator, and that his consciousness is observing manifestations it is not producing. It is a matter, in short, of an influence that takes place in the interior of the organism between different organs. The exact nature of this influence is precisely the object of the problem of immanent finality.

4. After these preliminary remarks we come to the heart of our problem. How can we reach the psychic life of vegetables? If vegetables really have a psychic life, they alone can directly attain it, and what they thus experience they cannot communicate to us. They have no language. If we wish to penetrate somewhat into the psychic life of vegetables, we must make a detour. We must observe their reactions to stimuli to see if, in these reactions, there is an element that goes beyond the laws of living matter such as we ourselves know them to be from our own vegetative life. If we find such an inexplicable element, we must attempt to determine its nature. For this purpose it will be useful to compare the reactions of plants with those of animals in the same circumstances. If the plant reactions resemble the animal reactions, point by point, we can then, by virtue of the principle of analogy, attribute to the plant a psychological life similar to that of the animal.

Let us examine the facts. Have the reactions which we observe in plants really something which goes beyond the laws of living matter as we experience them in our own vegetative life?

Some plants, when exposed to the sun, at once turn in its direction; others, when planted near water, stretch out their

roots towards it. *Mimosa pudica*, when we touch it, curls up; when an insect steps on the blossom of a carnivorous plant, it folds up and captures him. When it grows dark, the leaves of certain plants droop into a special posture, as if they were "going to sleep".

Let us consider these movements further. What characterizes them particularly is uniformity and regularity; all the individuals of the species execute the same movements, in the same circumstances. And the same individual will always behave in the same manner so long as the circumstances do not change. All these reactions of plants can be, so to speak, determined *a priori* by means of a mathematical calculation. Plants do not know error; a stimulus is infallibly followed by a corresponding reaction.

The fact mentioned just now is very important. Indeed, why do not several dogs behave in the same way in the same circumstances? Why does one and the same dog often act differently in the same circumstances? Because the movements of animals depend upon their knowledge. On account of the distance of the object, of the light, and so on, the knowledge of the animal varies. Sometimes it is entirely wrong. And the behavior of the animal follows the vicissitudes of its knowledge.

When there is a question of a man, the knowledge may be still more varied and the errors still more numerous. This fact is too well known for us to dwell upon it.

The plant shows no tendency to vary its behavior; moreover, it does not make any mistakes. On this point it resembles inorganic bodies. These also do not vary their behavior, they do not make mistakes. Water will always boil at 212° temperature, it will always freeze at 32° . No exception is possible here. What must we deduce from these facts? That the

activity of plants like that of inorganic beings is not directed by knowledge.

We are also led to the same conclusion by the principle of economy which has been known from very early times. The ancients used to express it in the following formula: *non sunt multiplicanda entia sine necessitate* (we should not multiply things without necessity). So, for instance, nobody will engage a thousand workers when a hundred suffice to execute the work. In the same way we explain a fact "scientifically" if we indicate a "sufficient" cause. The "superabundant" cause would turn science into magic, superstition. For science looks for the "laws". Now to say "law" is to say "necessity". Science will fill its noble mission when it indicates, in any determined case, what is strictly "necessary" to produce the fact in question, when it indicates to us its "sufficient" cause.

If the plant had sensations, as the Psychovitalists believe, certain sensations would necessarily be agreeable to it, others would be disagreeable. And this difference experienced in the affective life would manifest itself in some way. What we have said before about the influence of our feelings on our behavior excuses us from insisting upon this point.

When the Psychovitalists say that plants can have psychic life which nevertheless remains entirely hidden to our means of investigation, we reply: What reason have you to affirm the existence of this life? We must never affirm anything without reason! And if, in order to save the situation, they add that the senses of plants "entirely differ from our senses and from those of animals", our question becomes still stronger: What right have you to speak of "senses" if you suppose them to have no resemblance to ours?

The actions of vegetables, being uniform and regular, can be explained "sufficiently" by a natural disposition of the

cells, called "irritability". For example, if a plant is exposed to the sun, its illuminated part grows more slowly than the other side. The consequence of this inequality in growth will be an inclination of the plant toward the illuminated side. Knight has demonstrated how we can explain geotropism by means of terrestrial attraction alone. Let us add, by the way, that what is generally called "the static sense" in animal and human psychologies is not a special sense but a synthesis of sensations, or "perception", as we have tried to demonstrate elsewhere.¹²

The movement of reaction of the *Mimosa pudica* and of the carnivorous plants can also, it seems, be explained by the irritability of the living cell. When we touch these plants on some special spots, we change the intracellular pressure and produce a curve in them. These changes communicate themselves from one cell to another till they reach the roots of the leaves and flowers. It is in this way that the leaves and flowers can bend.

The Psychovitalists speak of the "sleep" of plants. But between this sleep and sleep such as we know it in animals and men there is no more resemblance than between *Canis*, the astronomical constellation, and a barking dog. That is to say, there is a question of two equivocal terms.

Let us note first that not all plants sleep. For example, plants with tough leaves, such as the laurel and the oak tree, do not indicate anything that could be called "sleep". Only plants with delicate—and in particular—composed leaves (such, for example, as *Mimosa pudica* or acacia) can "sleep".

But even in these plants the tendency to "sleep" does not remain the same during the whole life of the plant. It is most remarkable in the youth of the plant. In proportion to its

¹² *Psicologia Experimental*, chap. V.

growing old, the plant falls asleep with more and more difficulty.

The fact just mentioned is easily explained in our theory. Plants with delicate leaves, especially while they are young, have more irritable cells than plants with tough leaves or plants with delicate leaves at an advanced age! That is why they "fall asleep" more easily.

It is possible to accustom certain plants to "sleep" during the day and to keep awake during the night. It suffices for this purpose to keep them in a room which is lighted during the night, and dark during the day. This shows us that light is of chief importance in producing the effect of "sleep" or of being awake in plants. It has a much greater importance than in the life of animals and of men. Indeed, animals and men do not sleep only in darkness. They can also do so during the day.¹³

Moreover, we can produce the state of "sleep" in vegetables simply by shaking them roughly and for a long time. This fact is commonly known. The Psychovitalists themselves are far from denying it. Well, a prolonged wind which generally precedes a tempest can produce exactly the same effect. Here is the explanation of the "meteorological knowledge" of the plants of which some authors speak, and of their "gift of prophecy".

Every species of vegetable has its own way of sleeping; some bend their leaves downwards, others, on the contrary, set them upright. Some dispose their leaves around their flowers, others gather their higher leaves around their corols.

¹³ If certain plants show themselves refractory to any attempt of this kind, it remains to be seen if this is not due to the particular nature of the light used in these experiments. At any rate, the light was very different from daylight.

Several plants put in a room constantly dark or constantly illuminated show, however, periodicity of "sleep" and "waking". That is true. But it would be necessary to determine here the exact part played by the habit contracted.

And so on. Nevertheless this variety of forms of "sleep" is subject to certain general laws; the leaf takes, during the night, the posture which it had in the bud.

What is here to be especially noted is that this posture is often very forced; it is kept only because of the rigidity that invades the plant at sunset. If we try to change the posture of a sleeping plant, it is more easily broken than bent. It is far from the flaccidity which characterizes the sleeping animal. It is for this reason that the "sleep" of plants has nothing in common with the "rest" which is the principal end of sleep in the life of animals and men.

Finally, we find in plants no trace of the somnolence which is so characteristic of animals and men.¹⁴

But we shall make a still more serious reproach to the Psychovitalists: their theory is built up in an illogical manner. Indeed, it is in order to explain the phenomena which we find in plants that the Psychovitalists attribute to them a psychic life. These phenomena far surpass human science, if we are to believe some authors. Man, in his industry, does nothing, so to speak, but imitate plants. The manner in which we protect our fruit trees from insects with a ring of glue or of tar, the form which we give to submarines and boats, the use of hollow bricks in building houses, the production of celluloid, of different kinds of pumps, and so forth, all this we should have learned from plants! They would have "invented" all this before we did! "Every tree on the roadside, therefore, hides an invention which man has not been able to realize: its leaves and branches whisper that there are things of which our scholastic knowledge does not dream".¹⁵

¹⁴ See J. H. Fabre, *La plante*, causeries botaniques, chap. XVIII, 10^e ed. (Paris, 1923), pp. 177-182.

¹⁵ R. H. Francé, *The Love-life of Plants* (New York, 1923), p. 23.

Well, if all these marvels are really the effect of knowledge, as the Psychovitalists suppose, how perfect this knowledge must be! The simplest seaweeds would then possess more knowledge than the greatest geniuses among men!

But on the other hand, the Psychovitalists tell us that the mental faculties of plants do not surpass that of "the primitive animals".¹⁶ It is precisely for this reason that some of them categorically deny consciousness and the soul in plants.¹⁷ Where is the logic?

6. We shall be told, perhaps, that the examples quoted only tend to prove that we cannot explain immanent finality by the intervention of conscious psychic acts. They do not show that this finality can exist without the interference of any psychic act whatever. Some psychic facts that remain dim on the frontiers of our consciousness frequently intervene. Why could they not play a part when it is a question of organic functions?

To answer this question it is not necessary to deny the existence of unconscious psychic acts. They have nothing absurd in themselves. Of course if someone defines the psychic act by means of "consciousness", it will be very easy for him to demonstrate the contradiction in the idea of an "unconscious psychic act". For that should be an act which is at the same time "conscious" and "unconscious"! Indeed, it is in this way that some authors (Th. Ribot, H. Münsterberg, J. Laird, S. Boule, and others) attack unconscious acts. But what right have they to identify the "psychic" with the "conscious"? That is the problem. And this problem the authors

¹⁶ Adolf Wagner, *Vorlesungen über vergleichende Tier- und Pflanzenkunde* (Leipzig, 1912), p. 314. R. H. Francé, *Germes of Mind in Plants* (1907), p. 144. See also *ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁷ R. H. Francé, *Germes of Mind in Plants*, ed. cit., pp. 118, 120-121, 129, 132, 139.

just now mentioned have not solved: they have only dismissed it.

If we consider things from the historical point of view, it will not be difficult to find the source of the theory which identifies the psychic with the conscious. It is, without doubt, Cartesianism. The psychic is, according to Descartes, the act of the soul alone, its "mode" (*modus*). Now the soul is an actual thought. In order to admit the "unconscious" in these circumstances it would be necessary to say that the soul can be sometimes absent from itself. But this is incomprehensible, since intellectual thought is a spiritual, simple, and indivisible reality. It is for this reason that the psychic must necessarily be conscious.

But let us consider the Aristotelian or Scholastic system. Sensation is the act of the substantial composite, of body and soul. In order to produce it, it is first necessary to vanquish the inertia of matter by means of physical force.

But not every force suffices to produce a conscious sensation in us. A force is needed which possesses a certain minimum degree of intensity. We call it, today, "the excitation of the absolute threshold". In the same way we can be conscious of the difference between two excitations (which have overcome the "absolute threshold") in so far as this difference reaches a certain minimum of value. We call it "the excitation of the differential threshold". But these things are too well known for us to be obliged to insist upon them. Let us see, rather, what we can deduce from them with regard to the problem of the Unconscious.

The threshold excitation produces a conscious sensation in us, as we said just now. The excitation, if it be the least bit inferior, does not produce it. Now can we really suppose that this excitation is without any effect in the psychophysical being? That is improbable. Indeed, it obviously produces a

certain effect in the material part of our organism; we can demonstrate that by means of different instruments. Now the material part of man is not separated from the principle of life, from the soul. On the contrary, these two realities are so intimately united with one another that they constitute a unique principle of activity, a unique nature. For this reason it is necessary to admit, in this "psychophysical" being, the existence of acts which do not arrive at consciousness. These will be the "unconscious" psychophysical acts, or "unconscious" inferior psychic acts.

We shall also come to the same conclusion in another way. It is commonly known that we cannot have an act of sensation in a conscious manner if it does not last for a certain minimum of duration. Can we reasonably suppose that when this duration is ever so slightly diminished, no effect is produced in the psychophysical part of man, no psychic act?

Experimental psychology seems strongly to confirm that certain facts which belong to the normal psychic life could hardly be explained if we made a clean sweep of the psychic Unconscious.¹⁸ We shall go still further in this line. We shall say that even in animal life the unconscious element plays an important part.

How are we to imagine these psychic acts? That is impossible. Unconscious psychic acts are known to us only indirectly; they are the conclusion of a deduction which we draw from facts of which we are conscious.

This deduction is founded on the principle of causality. Now this kind of reasoning gives us only an analogical knowledge of the cause because it makes us know the fact as a "sufficient cause". It does not show us what the fact is in itself.

¹⁸ We have spoken of this problem more at length in *Psychologia Metaphysica*, lib. II, cap. III, art. I. Schol. IV. See also *Psicologia Experimental*, capit. XXII.

This explains to us, at the same time, why there can exist theories of the Unconscious that are so different from one another.

But we will not enter here into this problem. What interests us at present is only this: Can the Unconscious explain the immanent finality which characterizes vital operations?

Before we reply to this question, let us note that the unconscious life constitutes—from the logical viewpoint—a kind of prolongation of the conscious life. We have no difficulty in understanding that the solution of a problem is sometimes found when we are no longer thinking of it and after having tried to find it for a long time. That is because this prolonged effort of attention ends by impressing a particular orientation on all our mental activity; the unconscious element has gone on working, even though our consciousness, attracted to other subjects by exterior circumstances, has been turned away from our problem. We also understand why, when we have made a resolution to wake up tomorrow at five o'clock, we do actually awaken at that hour. It is because our will, called energetically to our help, has at that moment strongly influenced the general arrangement of a whole group of particular psychic schemes, and this influence has worked, unknown to us, in the same direction, obeying the initial impulse. One might explain in the same way the fact that a mother will awaken at the faintest cry of her child; her love surrounding him impresses on her attention a particular direction; it is what is called "preoccupation", "suggestion". "Suggestion at guiding mark", well known in cases of hypnosis and hysteria, is explained in the same way. These psychic influences spread themselves in us like the waves on the surface of a lake, set in motion by the fall of a stone.

The Unconscious is, so to speak, the point of departure or of arrival of the conscious life, without which it is quite unintelligible. A stone on the road has no consciousness. But it is not, therefore, "unconscious" in the sense which we have given to this word before, for it is not a psychophysical being.

"Conscious" and "unconscious" are of the same nature. What is wanting in the psychic act called "unconscious" is the knowledge which would refer it to the psychological subject. But this knowledge itself is exterior with respect to this psychic act. It changes nothing of its fundamental nature.

It is for this reason, doubtless, that we see the Conscious and the Unconscious subject to the same limitations and errors; the solution of a problem which we have abandoned, after having sought in vain to solve it, does not infallibly appear to us. In the same way, it sometimes happens that we do not wake up at the hour fixed in advance; a mother does not always hear the crying of her child.

If the organic operations are directed by an unconscious element, this element should be endowed with infallibility. We know that some philosophers admit this conclusion; the Unconscious, they believe, is infallible. But on what do they base their theory? They simply adopt it in order to maintain their thesis. The infallibility of the Unconscious, in so far as it is said to govern organic functions, has the value of a postulate. Now the postulate need not be proved.

Let us sum up. The activity of the Unconscious in organic functions rests on a gratuitous assertion. We do not find a trace of any idea, of any fact of a psychic order in organic functions.

But this solution is purely negative. Let us seek for a positive explanation of the nature of "the intention", of "the

idea" which directs the functions of the living being and is the source of the immanent finality.

First, the intention, the directing idea, is not a mechanical force nor a chemical reaction. It is invoked in order to govern the mechanical forces and the chemical reactions of the organism, to guide them in their work. Therefore it must be of superior nature.

As soon as we venture to explain this superior force, we meet with great difficulties, as we find nothing in this world that perfectly resembles this "idea". It is really *sui generis*. We must be satisfied with an approximate, analogous notion of it.

This point was clearly seen by the Neovitalists. "Vital force" has no analogy, they say, with anything that we find in the world of our experience. Nevertheless the objections that can be made to the "vital force" are such that it is impossible for us to admit this. Let us mention some. As soon as an organ of the living being is threatened with danger, other organs come to its rescue. This is precisely the effect of the vital force, the Neovitalists say! But how can the vital forces of the distant cells be informed of the danger in question? Shall we say, with certain authors, that there exists "a spiritual communication" between all vital forces, or that every vital force naturally knows the needs of the whole organism? One can easily see the consequence of this solution—and this psychovitalism!

Our difficulty with the classical "vital force" grows if we take into account the following circumstance: the vital force should also know other individuals. Indeed, is it not the vital forces which, according to the Neovitalists, construct the reproductive organs, produce the honey in the flowers, give their poison to the vipers, and so forth? Could the vital force do all this without thinking of other individuals?

But the knowledge that we should then have to attribute to the vital forces would place before us a new problem. They would execute their works without hesitation, without error, but, on the other hand, they would not be capable of making any progress, of benefiting by their own experience. And so they would be most intelligent and most stupid at the same time!

That is not all. If the vital forces know their goal and pursue it with their efforts, their knowledge far surpasses that of animals; it must be spiritual, properly speaking. But in this case a new difficulty presents itself: How do these spiritual creatures come into existence? How do they multiply themselves? How do they apply themselves to matter, to move or to stop it, to change the direction or the speed of the movement? In order to do all this, the vital forces should, of course, impress a certain quantity of energy on matter. But then the total amount of disposal energy would change at every moment in the world. And what value, in that case, would the principle of the conservation of energy, so much praised by modern scholars, possess?

We now see how many dreadful problems are involved by the Neovitalist theory! Let us look for another solution.

"The idea" present in the organism "directs" it, "governs" it, we have said. This would, no doubt, be by some kind of decrees, of laws!

These laws—need we say?—would not be similar to those that govern human society because they do not emanate from a person, neither do they apply to persons; they are not promulgated by the intermediary of knowledge. Then they are not laws in the strict meaning of the word, formal laws. They are laws *sui generis*. Let us call them "virtual laws". What are we to understand by that?

What is most characteristic of law, properly speaking, that is, of formal law, is its "efficacy", the power by which it can lead all reasonable people to do what the law requires. This element should not be absent in "virtual laws"; they also command, urge, move to action. Nevertheless they do not impose themselves from outside. Indeed, to live is to act; to act by one's own initiative and for one's own advantage. A stone thrown by a boy "acts" also. Nevertheless the principle of its action is to be found outside it because it is the boy who gives motion to it. And the effect of this action does not remain necessarily in the stone; it can pass on to other bodies. On the contrary, the living being acts by itself and for itself. What we have said before about the vital operations (nutrition, growth, regeneration) makes further explanation superfluous.

The "virtual law" imposes itself from within; it is from within that it directs the operations of the organism towards a determined goal.

But who is the author of this law? The organism itself! In order to understand this, we need only remember that the goal of a being is that which constitutes its own "good". The organism tends to its goal by pursuing its own "good". Now the good of anything is that which can contribute to its perfection. The good of a vegetable favors its nutrition, its growth, and other vital operations.

But how can the organism "distinguish" what is "good" for it? Is not knowledge necessary for this? By no means. The discrimination in question can be made by the very fact that certain elements can be assimilated by the organism and others not. It is the nature of the living being that causes the discrimination.

The same is true for other vital functions. It is the nature of the organism which determines how the multiplication of

the cells will be made and at what forms it will finally stop. In this sense we can say that it is the nature of the organism that constitutes the "principle of finality" in the vital operations.

But the nature in question is not an effect of pure chance. It is an effect of the vital operation of another being. This is the precise sense of the Aristotelian-Scholastic formula: the living being acts in virtue of its generator. But this generator depends, in its turn, upon the generator from which it received its nature.

Shall we, in this ascending way, go on to the infinite series? Some philosophers think so. But they are wrong. For however long this series may be, it does not change the nature of the things which compose it. The infinite series cannot then explain its existence any better than can its links. In order to avoid a conflict with the principle of causality, it is necessary to stop at the first cause, at God.

But this does not yet suffice. For the finality of the organism is immanent and therefore it cannot be reduced to a simple movement from outside. It cannot be an effect of God in so far as He would, at any moment and by special assistance, direct the action of the organism towards a determined goal.

It is then necessary to admit, besides the "Divine idea" which presided over the production of the living organism, still "another idea" which constantly resides in the organism itself. Being present in each part of the organism, this idea profoundly affects its way of acting, its behavior, its natural tendencies. It enters the interior of the organism in the form of an active, dynamic element. The material being is not simple. It is composed of two elements, the active and the passive. Moreover, the idea in question does not possess extension. It is for this reason that it can direct the vital

functions in all the parts of the organism, it can be present everywhere simultaneously but without division. Indeed, if we admit that it can be multiple, we at once fall again into difficulties similar to those we described when criticizing the mechanical theory of life and that of Vitalism. How is it possible that the forces which direct the vital operations agree so perfectly with regard to the good of the whole being? How can they assure the admirable order that we find in it?

We see, then, that the idea on which immanent finality is founded is not of the psychic order. It is an "incarnate" idea if we may be allowed this expression. It constitutes the dynamic element of the living being, its "nature". We cannot reach it by intuition; neither can it be the object of immediate knowledge. It is a cause that philosophical reflection adopts. We know it only by its effects, therefore only by analogy.

What we have just said explains how we are to understand Evil in the realm of vegetable beings. It is a trouble of the organic order, a privation of natural perfection. It does not imply any kind of pain. Evil is a hindrance to the immanent finality of being. But the immanent finality of the vegetable does not imply any psychic act.

4

EVIL IN THE DOMAIN OF THE SENSITIVE LIFE

1. In any being endowed with feeling, we find a psychic idea. The existence of this is attested by our consciousness. It is involved in empirical knowledge of material objects, in sensation.

This idea may take different forms: sometimes it is "elementary sensation", visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, etc.; sometimes it is the "sensitive image" lying at the base of the imagination and the sensitive memory.

It may have different degrees of clarity, of precision, of consistency, of inward depth. Experimental and metaphysical psychology give us the details. It is useless to speak of them here.¹

2. This psychic idea is found not only in man but also in animals. Descartes' theory of the "machine animal" (*bête-machine*) has had its day.

The modern theory which persists in seeing in animals only complicated fittings of "tropisms" does not differ essentially from the theory of the "machine animal". The behaviorists—those who remain consistent with their principles—do not purely and simply deny psychic life in animals. They only systematically abstract from it.

But we do not intend to enter into this problem which we

¹ As it is easy to see, we here use "idea" in a broad sense. Thus understood, it coincides with "mental representation".

have already discussed elsewhere. We will only say what we think about "reasoning by analogy" which serves to prove the existence of psychic life in animals.

"Reasoning by analogy" supposes that similar effects come from similar causes. Is this supposition well founded?

At first sight it seems not to be so. For example, let us suppose that upon returning home you find your papers, which you left in perfect order on the table, scattered all over the floor. You wonder who caused all this disorder; so you carefully consider the "effect" (the disorder). Through an analysis of this effect you attempt to determine the nature of the "cause".

Now in many cases it will be impossible for you to do so. The conclusion at which you will often be obliged to halt will be the following one: the cause of the disorder is perhaps a man (your awkward servant or a thief), or an animal (your cat or dog), or, finally, a draft produced at the moment of your leaving the room. For all these things could "suffice" to explain the effect mentioned.

Moved by this consideration, many scholars think it impossible to demonstrate that the similar behavior of animal and man must be explained by similar causes; and they deduce that the existence of psychic life in animals cannot be proved. What shall we say of this argument? In order to answer this problem let us start from the theory of Descartes. It is very instructive. He says: if "human industry can make" "different automatons and moving machines" which amaze us, "what could not God make if He wished".² Certainly, the machines which He would make would be able to execute perfectly all the movements that we see in animals; they would walk, jump, cry, and so on.

² *Discours de la méthode*, IV^{ème} Partie, éd. Ch. Adam et Paul Tann., t. VI, pp. 55-56.

Now can we "demonstrate" the absurdity of this theory? Evidently not, because the cause which Descartes gives really "suffices" to explain the effects mentioned. His theory does not manifestly violate the supreme principle of logic, namely, that of causality.

But if it is not "absurd", the Cartesian theory is not necessarily true. Let us examine. The first difficulty we find in this theory is its conflict with the "principle of economy". We must always try to explain the facts which we find in Nature by what is strictly necessary to this purpose. And this holds true because Science explains facts by their "laws". Now to say "law" is to say "necessity". To explain facts by some "superabundant" or "superfluous" causes is a childish game, a joke, a superstition, and not Science!

It is for this reason that we must not recur to God (we must not make Him perform continuous miracles in order to overcome, in any situation of the animal, the obstacles which come from natural laws, from inertia, and so forth) without having first demonstrated the insufficiency of natural causes. When we force ourselves to look for the cause of a certain natural fact, we must suppose—for the sake of "method"—that the fact in question can be explained by natural causes; we must provisionally admit the principle of "the naturalistic explanation" of Nature. Only after we have demonstrated the insufficiency of natural causes can we be allowed (and even obliged!) by virtue of the principle of causality to recur to the supernatural cause, God, in order to explain the fact mentioned.

Now has Descartes demonstrated that there exist no causes in the world which would be able to explain naturally the behavior of animals? For the "animal machine", by means of which he explains the behavior of animals, cannot be considered as strictly "natural". Indeed, animals perform

some actions which are obviously in contradiction with the mechanical laws of gravitation, inertia, and so on. Therefore if animals have no psychic life at all, these actions must be performed by the special help of God, by His supernatural intervention, in a word, by "miracles".

This is not all. The Cartesian theory proves too much. In fact, this theory could, in the same way, furnish us with "the sufficient reason" of the behavior of our fellow men without our being obliged to attribute mental life to them either.

This objection is very serious. Descartes himself is far from denying that. In order to solve it he tells us that no machine can "set in order [its words] to reply to all the questions that could be put to it. Now the most stupid men are able to do so".³ It is for this reason, he concludes, that we must attribute to them the psychic life which we deny the animals.

Is this solution a good one? We do not think so. The human machine would not need to "set in order" its words. God could do this for it at every moment. The human machine would only utter them. Certainly the divine interventions, the miracles, necessary to direct the behavior of man would have to be more numerous than those which are needed for directing animals. But *plus et minus non mutat speciem*, the greater or lesser degree in some perfection does not change its essence.

This objection is very important, because it directly opposes "common sense".

What do we mean by "common sense" in philosophy? "The constant and universally admitted propositions that constitute an indispensable foundation of human life" (their truth, let us add immediately, is evident from that finality in Nature). Now if we deny that other people have a psychic

³ *Ibid.*, IV^{ème} Partie, pp. 56-57.

life similar to our own, the existence of humanity becomes really impossible. For humanity cannot exist without social life and morals and social life and morals suppose the same nature in all men.

It is obvious, too, that other people could then deny, with the same right, the existence of psychic life in ourselves. Now this existence is an evident fact. It is apodictically proved through an immediate intuition of our consciousness. It is metaphysically certain.

Let us pass on to another argument against the theory which denies, with Descartes and many Behaviorists, psychic life in animals. This theory contradicts the finality which is manifest in Nature.

Animals have organs similar to ours; comparative anatomy clearly shows this. They use them in the same way that we do; comparative physiology certainly proves this. They turn their eyes to see better; they move their heads to hear better; they put their noses near an object to smell it better, and so on. While performing these operations they manifest tendencies similar to ours: inclination to the agreeable, aversion from the disagreeable, reactions of anger, hunger, and so forth. Now we know by experience that our organs are for us so many instruments of sensations. That the animal organs similar to ours have in them the same function as ours, that they serve to produce sensations, is obvious from the finality which exists in Nature. This finality is easily proved either *a priori* or *a posteriori*. We have spoken of this in another study.

Let us consider the last argument in favor of reasoning by analogy. Here it is; those who reject its value are guilty of an error in scientific method.

Indeed, when a chemist finds "similar effects" in his laboratory, he instinctively supposes that they are produced

by "similar" elements. Physicists, mineralogists, and so on, proceed in the same manner. They all feel loath to attribute similar effects to dissimilar causes.

They seem to be perfectly justified. Indeed, there is nothing in Nature which is left to chance. This holds good also for activity. No cause can produce anything without being beforehand determined to produce that effect. An undetermined cause is like a man who is completely indifferent towards any movement. As long as he remains in this state, how could he move? Only after having abandoned it, only after making a resolution, will he be able to do so.

The same holds good for every being in Nature. As long as it remains in a state of indetermination it is incapable of any action. The difference between man and other natural beings is that those other than man do not have to determine themselves to action by a decision of their own will. This decision was made once for all by the Creator and included in their nature. Indeed, it is their nature which determines what they are to do. Activity is nothing but a communication of being. It is for this reason that activity manifests the perfection of the essence of the being.

This being so, it is natural that similar effects should indicate similar causes. Nevertheless this conclusion will not be easily agreed upon by everybody. They will ask us: Why, then, were we not able to say if our papers, alluded to before, had been scattered all over the floor by a man, or by an animal, or by a draft? The answer is easy: Because the effect (dispersion of the papers on the floor) is too simple. And it is for this reason that it does not clearly manifest the properties of the cause.

We can illustrate this by means of an example taken from testimony. We know that a single witness to a fact gives us generally only the probability that this fact occurred. How-

ever, if several witnesses relate the fact in the same manner, without having been with one another beforehand, we have certitude about the fact related.

This certitude is not obtained by the simple addition of a single witness. For the sum of probabilities is itself only a probability. The certitude in question is founded on the metaphysical principle of causality. The agreement of the witnesses in this case is a new fact in Nature which itself demands a proportionate cause. Now this cause cannot be, in certain circumstances, anything else than the fact attested to by the witnesses.

It is the same situation in our case about animals. One indication of psychic life in the animal gives us, generally speaking, only probability, but if the indications are numerous and profound, they give us certitude. Now the reactions which we see in animals are precisely of such a nature. That they are numerous, experience tells us. That they are profound appears clearly from their being "vital actions", for these vital actions involve an harmonious collaboration of the whole organism. Every vital action is produced by the whole organism, by all its cells. We have explained this at length in another book.

Nevertheless the certitude which all these indications give us is not mathematical but only physical. This point is very important. If a man believes that mathematical certitude is the only genuine certitude, reasoning by analogy can give him only probability.

We think that this opinion is false. ^{PRACTICAL?} Physical certitude can also be genuine certitude. Epistemology demonstrates this clearly. Reasoning by analogy can then give us genuine certitude. By means of it we can demonstrate psychic life in animals. It is true that our sensation is not perfectly identical with that of animals. It differs from it by its accuracy, by the

degree of its intimacy, and so on. Yet these differences concern the "degree" not the essence or quality.

3. It is not within the scope of this work to explain the nature of sensation, its physiological and psychological origin, its criterion of value. For our purpose it is sufficient to say that sensation appears to us an eminently passive state of consciousness.

We do not mean by this that sensation can ever be produced without the active participation of the subject! Being a vital act it is thereby an action of the subject, his "immanent action". Nevertheless this action remains in the background of consciousness. It is the action of the object on the subject that stands out and absorbs attention. Our organs appear to us as so many openings in the opaque block of our body through which surrounding objects tend to penetrate. Indeed they do penetrate into us if their action is sufficiently vigorous; in other words, if they surpass in intensity the "threshold stimulus". Then they introduce themselves into the subject and settle down to live the same life; the subject is, in a certain sense, conquered. But this victory of the object over the subject is precisely what constitutes the objectivity of consciousness. If the subject were to conquer the object, our knowledge would be entirely subjective, it would be nothing more than a fiction. This defeat of the subject is its greatness.

Knowledge instructs the subject on the state of the things surrounding him; it shows him the world he lives in—and that is all. It has no other aim but to inform him. It leaves him indifferent to the things of this world; it does not inspire him to any initiative with regard to them; it does not force him to take a dynamic attitude.

This is true also for the "moving ideas" or "idea forces" (*idées-motrices*, *idées-forces*). Thus, we were saying else-

where, if someone does not know how to sew, the sight of a needle will not urge him to execute the movement of sewing. Moreover, it will not suggest to him any idea of sewing. That is because the sight of the needle does not contain any representation of the action of sewing. It is only, thanks to the association contracted between the needle and the action of sewing, that the sight of a needle is able to suggest to a subject an idea of sewing.

4. But what value would this knowledge have for the subject—this sterile, mental photography—if he could not change his conduct with a view to adapting himself to circumstances, to the actual conditions that allow him to live? Knowledge for the sake of knowledge? Better, then, to know nothing at all, for one would be spared the bitterness of being unable to act on what one knows; one would escape the humiliation of doing everything improperly, of being unable to act in conformity with the actual situation revealed by knowledge, in a word, of acting like a fool.

To justify the existence of knowledge rationally, it is absolutely necessary to find a complement of a dynamic kind for it in the subject. The subject must have, besides the vital process which originates in the outside, in the form of knowledge, another process which comes from within.

Such are the metaphysics of what is known in psychology as “the affection”. It is a “vital response” of the subject to the apparition of good. It is a dynamic attitude that the subject takes with a view to adaptation to the new situation created by the sudden eruption of knowledge. It is an immanent finality appropriate to the sensitive being.

It is from this that the dominion of the subject over the world and also over himself proceeds. Vegetables form an “empire” in the empire of the universe because they enjoy a species of autonomy, as we have said. But the sensitive being

has a more perfect "empire", for his autonomy is regulated by more subtle laws which allow of his adapting himself more rapidly and more completely to every new situation.

Affection is, then, for the sensitive being the principle of immanent finality in proportion to the degree of his knowledge.

5. An affection may take various forms. Experimental psychology describes the details. For us, since we are approaching the problem of affection from the purely metaphysical viewpoint, it is only necessary to observe that any affection is in a sense a will, in the widest meaning of the word, it is a love.

Now love is a tendency towards the Good reached by the senses.⁴ In the sensible world it is a kind of judgment of value. Actually, not all reality excites love. If a certain object does so, it is because the sensitive being has caught a glimpse of something that can serve him as a complement, something capable of drawing him to his own perfection; in short, because he has considered it good.

6. This good—must we repeat—is of a concrete nature. The sensitive faculties are incapable of perceiving anything of another essence. It must be a good accessible to the senses and effectively "felt". "Utility" cannot therefore be the good in this case, for utility implies a relation, and a relation in itself cannot be attained by the senses but only by abstract knowledge, as we have already said.

This good within the reach of our sensitive faculties is the enjoyment of the senses. That is the good adapted to the sensitive being, the true motive power of all his efforts.

If we wish to use scholastic terminology, we must say that it is the pleasure of the senses that constitutes the "formal

⁴ We are speaking here of love awakened by the senses, therefore of sensual love.

object" of all the activities of the animal. It is always for the sake of enjoyment that it uses so much activity. It never acts from any other motive. It does not undertake any action for its own sake but only because that action procures for it, or promises it, some sense enjoyment.

Attracted by pleasure, an animal goes through many movements that will lead it unconsciously to its own perfection. Such movements are very useful to it, but it does not create them for that reason, only for its own pleasure.

The sensitive being is condemned by reason of its nature to be always and in all things "hedonist", for it does not even suspect the existence of any other kind of good. It is confined in absolute egoism and never leaves it. Indeed, to be able to go out of the self, one must be able to oppose the self, to divide into two some way; in a word, to know how to abstract from oneself. Now an animal is quite incapable of doing so. All that is told of the "unselfishness", the "devotion", the "spirit of sacrifice" of animals is only a sign of anthropomorphism. For example, if the setting hen does not leave her eggs, that is only because their contact absorbs the excessive heat that a plexus swollen with blood creates in the abdomen at certain times. If the mother animal feeds her little one, it is because the milking relieves her swollen breasts and soothes her. When later, as the result of some physiological change, she no longer feels any desire to do so, we notice that she does not even recognize her offspring but treats it as if it were any other animal, definitely abandons it. "The sweet turtledoves" which lavish a touching solicitude for their young ones, become indifferent, even cruel, towards them as soon as they have grown. "Using their bill as a weapon, they make them bleed, open their skulls, and finally kill them. . . . If other animals do not always show the ferocity of the tender

turtledove to their little ones, at least they all forget them, do not recognize them as soon as they have become adult. But their little ones repay them with the same coin. What does this universal fact mean? It means that animals are, according to the consecrated expression, brutes".⁵ In the same way, the bees which move us by so much devotion for their charming society, regularly organize the most repugnant slaughters in their hives. "Without any previous summons, the worker bees in a moment fall upon the males, pursue them from one honeycomb to another, pull them about, tear them in pieces, and stab them. The massacre is general; it extends to the whole male population without any distinction of age. After the slaughter of the adults comes that of the larvas and nymphs; the bees draw them from their cradles and pierce them with their darts; the corpses are dragged outside the hives and thrown to the wind".⁶

The attachment that a dog shows to his master is based solely on gluttony or voracity. The master is for the dog nothing more than an inexhaustible source of enjoyment. The dog will defend his master, it is true, but only as it would defend a piece of meat that someone tried to snatch from its teeth. It sometimes risks death in defending its master, it "sacrifices" itself, but it will do the same for no matter what prey. Besides, it has no consciousness of the sacrifice; it cannot foresee its own death. Death, in so far as it is a privation of life, is "a being of reason" (*ens rationis*), and beings of reason can only be known by the "reason" and not by the senses.

Animals are all affected by the most radical psychologism that could be. For them the ontological aspect does not even

⁵ See De Bonniot, S. J., *La bête comparée à l'homme* (Paris, 1899), pp. 73-74.

⁶ Victor Rendu, *Mœurs pittoresques des insectes*, p. 33.

exist. They have no faculty that could allow them to distinguish between the pleasure of the action and the action itself. They are not aware of any absolute value. Everything for them is relative; relative to their senses, to their organic constitution.

7. But we must reply here to an objection that will undoubtedly be raised: animals possess instinct. Now instinct, according to current opinion, is precisely the faculty that reaches the object in so far as it is "convenient" (*conveniens*), "useful", and not as it is "sensible".

We will not pause here to discuss thoroughly the nature of instinct. We have done so in another work.⁷ We believe that we succeeded in showing that the idea of "convenient", of "useful", does not belong to the animal. J. H. Fabre came to the same conclusion after long and patient research. Speaking of the animal, Fabre used these words: "It does masonry, it weaves, it hunts, it stabs, it paralyzes, it digests, it secretes the poison of its weapon, the "silk" of its shell, the wax of its combs, all without the slightest calculation of the means and the aim!"⁸ We have tried to show that when the animal undertakes its instinctive work, it has no idea of what that work is. When the bee flies off to plunder, it has not the slightest idea of the honeycombs that will be erected later. When the bird picks up a wisp of straw, it has no mental picture of a nest to be made. The animal is not attracted to the work but to the action. The quantity and quality of their action are inscribed in advance, so to speak, in their organism in the form of a particular "affection" that urges them to carry on movements that are different in one species from those in another. In short, the animal starts to work instinc-

⁷ *De natura instinctus*, Congress, Internal. Thomist. II (Romae, 1936).

⁸ *Souvenirs entomologiques*, Paris, t. IV, chap. III: *Aberrations de l'instinct*, p. 51.

tively to satisfy its needs, to gain some pleasure,⁹ the pleasure that is its good, as we have said.

8. As to its Evil, that is disgust. Pleasure attracts, fascinates; disgust repulses, puts to flight. From the ontological viewpoint, it is possible to consider these two antagonistic states as being of the same essence: the sensitive being shrinks from disgust because it pursues pleasure; it repulses evil because it seeks the good. In short, it is only a single tendency that we are concerned with here. But from the psychological point of view, it is impossible to reduce these two tendencies to one only. The most subtle psychologist could never succeed in reducing disgust to a species of pleasure, or vice versa. In the same way as in matters of logic, we cannot assimilate negation and affirmation. What affirmation is in the static order of knowledge, pleasure is in the dynamic order of tendency. The same observation applies to disgust and nega-

⁹ The animal is conscious of the action that it is carrying on, but not of the work to be accomplished. It is perfectly able to fight the obstacles that impede its actions, while it is incapable of correcting its work. Fabre gives several examples that are quite characteristic. The *Sphex* "is occupied in closing up the hole in which its prey is stored, and the eggs are laid. . . . I go in and interrupt its work. The *Sphex* goes away. . . . I take away the stock in the hole. . . . The *Sphex* returns, and finding the door open, goes in and stays there for some moments. Then it comes out and takes up its work just where I had interrupted it, that is, it starts again to block up the entrance to its cell. . . . It must know that there is no longer anything in it because it had just been in and even stayed there a little while, and yet after visiting its pillaged residence, it starts to block up the cell again with the same care as if nothing extraordinary had happened. . . . Had it really not noticed the absence of the food and the eggs? So acute in its murderous habits, could it really be so lacking in intelligence as not to recognize that the cell was empty? I dare not credit it with such stupidity. It has seen it. . . . But then why this other stupidity of stopping up, and conscientiously stopping up, an empty hole? . . . The work is useless and absurd in the extreme. . . . The different instinctive acts of the insects are then inevitably linked one to the other". (*Op. cit.*, t. I, chap. XII: *Ignorance de l'instinct*, pp. 198-201. See *ibid.*, t. IV, chap. III: *Aberrations de l'instinct*, pp. 35-53.) And this is his conclusion: "The insect that amazes us, scares us by its lucidity, the next instant, faced with the simplest fact that is strange to its usual routine, astonishes us by its stupidity". (*Op. cit.*, t. I, chap. XII, p. 192.)

tion, which are mutually in correspondence but on different planes (dynamic for tendency, static for knowledge).

9. We must add a word of explanation on the subject of the expressions "pleasure" and "disgust". They can be easily misunderstood.

Pleasure and disgust are two antagonistic tendencies. We cannot reconcile them. Psychologists are entirely in agreement on this. Disgust, they admit, can never be agreeable. But pain? Pain, yes, reply several authors, that can please. Some pains have an attraction and are sometimes sought after.

We cannot share this opinion. It seems to us to rest on a confusion of the psychological with the physiological aspect of the question. Physiological irritation of the nerves (that men feel as a pain) may easily be passed on to other nerves and thus produce different kinds of organic sensations, some of which might be agreeable. The latter could sometimes, by dominating the consciousness, drive the pain into the background, thus lessening it or even causing it to be forgotten. It is also possible that they may simply mix with the pain, and in that case one could easily believe that the pain itself became agreeable. Such an illusion frequently occurs.¹⁰

If we look at pain from the psychological point of view, it is not agreeable, it cannot please. To support the first statement, let us add another: one certainly cannot simply reduce the idea of disgust to that of pain. The idea of disgust exceeds that of pain. One might say that disgust is a genus

¹⁰ "What shall we say now", A. Binet asks, "of this strange paradoxical phenomenon to which the name 'voluptuousness' of pain has been given?" And this is his answer: "To understand how one can take pleasure in suffering, one must have recourse to the law of the association of ideas and sensations. It is this law that, in our opinion, gives the key to the problem". (*Études de psychologie expérimentale: le fétichisme dans l'amour*, 1888, pp. 60-61.)

of which pain is only one particular "species". Pain might be a species of disgust related only to touch (taking this word in its widest sense).

Besides this kind of disgust that we call pain, there exist other kinds in man; aversions and other disagreeable feelings of an aesthetic and moral order. But as to animals, it is quite certain that they do not experience them. Aesthetic griefs are essentially disinterested and animals are incurably selfish. They do not possess moral sentiments, for these imply a knowledge of the moral order which, in turn, involves abstract knowledge.

To sum up, there is only one kind of displeasure in the animal life, that of touch, in the widest sense of the word, or pain. Pain—that is the Evil peculiar to the sensitive life.

10. Evil considered formally is nothing positive, as we have said before. It is only a deprivation of a perfection which a being should possess. This holds true also for pain. It is evil formally because of the privation which it implies. But this requires a word of explanation, for there are many who have difficulty in understanding it. "The experience of sensible beings"—says Ch. Renouvier—"testifies irrefutably that physical pain is a different thing from imperfection. . . . Therefore a positive evil exists."¹¹

If the light waves strike our eye, this reacts by the vision of a color. The ear attacked by the sound waves reacts by hearing. And so on. Now pain has an analogous origin. It is the reply, the spontaneous reaction of a being endowed with sensitive life, to a change of the organism more or less dangerous, more or less profound (pressure, contusions, lacerations, and so on). Where is evil formally to be found? To feel the change which occurs in an organism is not an evil

¹¹ Charles Renouvier, *Histoire et solution des problèmes métaphysiques* (Paris, Alcan, 1901), p. 164.

for an organism. When a living being becomes insensible to any pressure, to any contusion, to any laceration, and so on, it is finished. It cannot live any more. The true evil of pain is the destruction of tissues, produced by the actions mentioned just above (pressure, contusion, etc.). But the destruction of tissues is only a lack of order, of harmony in the organism. It is a privation.

Pain is disagreeable. Of course! Because the change mentioned is an evil for the tissues of the living being. Pain is evil only in so far as we consider it conjointly with the change mentioned.

But can it ever be separated from such a change? Fortunately, it cannot. If one could effect this separation, pain would really be a positive evil. Because it would be disagreeable by its own essence. But this supposition is absurd. One can never separate from a being its transcendental relation. Now between pain and the change which is destructive of the organism there exists a transcendental relation. For pain is but an effect of the change mentioned. Now the relation between the effect and its proper cause is transcendental.¹²

¹² In what sense is a tumor an evil? See footnote 5 of the first chapter.

EVIL IN THE LIFE OF MAN

1. Man has been called a microcosm, that is, a little universe. This idea came from antiquity. It is clearly expressed in the writings of Democritus,¹ of Plato,² of Aristotle,³ of the Stoics,⁴ of Boethius,⁵ of St. Gregory of Nazianzus,⁶ of St. Gregory of Nyssa,⁷ of Nemesius,⁸ and of the Manichaeans.⁹ Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Socrates, and the Pythagoreans allude to the same idea.

This idea is true enough. Man is, indeed, a kind of compendium of the universe: inorganic, vegetable, and animal elements are all to be found in him. By the minerals that enter into the composition of his body, man is a part of the cosmic world; by nutrition, by growth, by reproduction, by regeneration of the tissues, man is a being who allies himself with the vegetable kingdom. Sensation, pleasure, sensual love make him, in the most complete meaning of the word, an animal. Philosophers often speak of him as the "reasonable animal" (*animal rationale*).

¹ Fragm. 34.

² *Phileb.* 30; *Tim.* iv. 27 sq.

³ *Phys.* viii. 2. 252^b 26.

⁴ They called the universe μέγαν ἄνθρωπον and man himself ὁραχὴν κόσμον.

⁵ ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶ μικρόκοσμος, id est, homo est minor mundus (*Op.* p. 659).

⁶ *Orat.* 34.

⁷ *De an. et resurrect.* p. 188; *De hom. opif.* i. 227B.

⁸ περὶ φύσεως i. 14.

⁹ *Archel. et Man. disp.* 8.

Certainly, the vegetative and sensitive life take on characteristic forms in man that cannot be transmitted to other beings. Psychology, physiology, and anatomy give us the details. But only the details. The foundation remains the same.

2. [✓]That which constitutes the true distinctive feature in man is intelligence. It is by his intelligence that man is distinguished from all that surrounds him and proves himself to be superior. Without losing contact with the material world, he moves towards the spiritual; and since the three kingdoms of Nature are simultaneously represented in him, all this immense Nature sets forth in him and by him towards another destiny, a superior destiny.

3. But let us see how the intelligence of man proclaims a superior immanent finality which very often becomes the source of Evil for him.

Instead of stopping, as the senses do, at the qualities which play in some way on the surface of being, intelligence goes to the foundation of things and forms an idea of their essence. That is equally true as regards the knowledge of Good. Intelligence does not stop at the good as it exists for vegetables, nor at that to which the senses aspire; it goes directly to that which is its "formal reason", that is, towards the essence of Good.

As in efficient causes one cannot go backwards *ad infinitum*, neither can we do so in final causes. A man wishes to work in order to gain money; he wishes to gain money in order to go to a watering place; he wishes to go to a spa in order to improve his health. So it is health which commands all these acts. If we suppressed it, they would all lose their foundation; they would constitute a series which would be suspended upon nothing! It would be an effect without a cause. It is for this reason that we must always stop at some

good which is desired for itself, at the Goal. It is from the Goal that the "means" draw their value. This is expressed by the celebrated saying: *Bonum diffusivum sui*: the Good, being a goal, communicates its value to other things.

But what is a goal in one order of things can be, in its turn, considered as "means" in another order. Thus health can be desired as a necessary means in order to accomplish a task to which we attach great importance. But this task again can still be a "means" with respect to some superior goal, to fame, for example.

The series of subordinate goals—no less than the series of means—and for the same reason—must cease before infinity is reached. We must stop at some Goal which is absolutely wished for in itself. This will be the Good in itself. It is from it that whatever is "good" in all things comes. If, by an impossible supposition, it failed, all good in the world would disappear at once. And as Good does not really differ from the Being—as we have seen before—the whole universe would cease to exist. It is in this sense that the universe "is suspended" upon its last Goal, the Good in itself, God.

If we add anything whatever to the essence of something, as we have already pointed out, we find ourselves confronted by something which is completely different from the first because it differs from it by "essence". In the same way, if we add to the essence of the Good, it is no longer the Good in itself. It follows that no kind of negation, of privation, of limitation is compatible with the Good in itself.

4. Such a Good cannot be repulsed by any will. For to be repulsed it must appear as undesirable for some reason, and consequently, as though it contained something Evil. Now the Good in itself cannot contain anything that could make it appear undesirable, that is, any trace of Evil.

The living being who has once seen the Good in itself cannot maintain an attitude of indifference towards it. He is from that moment fascinated, conquered. He loves it; he turns towards it; for he knows that in this fullness of Good he will necessarily find the element, thanks to which his own perfection will be accomplished.

5. That is why man cannot remain indifferent to the Good in itself. He loves it, desires it, and tends towards it. It is because of this tendency towards the Good in itself that he desires particular goods. They are not "Good", the complete Good, and so the will does not necessarily desire them. However, they carry the impression of Good in itself, they are like a reflection, a picture, or shadow of it. Since they participate in the Good in itself, they may be the objects of human will; secondary, derived, free objects.

6. If we wish to use scholastic terminology, we would say that the Good in itself is the "formal" object of the will because it is through it that the will desires all that it does desire. If it desires particular objects, it is because the intelligence discovers in them something of the Good in itself; it does not desire them for their own sake.

What we have just said finds a striking illustration in the "problem of the free will". Some determinists ask how free will can come into play when there is question of two equally desirable things. What sufficient reason could there be to "choose", that is to "prefer" one of these to the other? And even if it is a question of two good things of unequal attraction? How could the will ever be drawn towards the one that promises less satisfaction? How could we justify such an absurd preference?

By virtue of this reasoning, the determinists state the following conclusion: "liberty of indifference", "free will", is simply a fiction.

From one point of view the determinists are perfectly right: free will, as they conceive of it, is an impossibility. If we place two exactly equal weights on the two sides of a pair of scales, they will remain in perfect equilibrium; they will not incline to one side rather than to the other.¹⁰ But supposing that we change our mind and place on the scales two unequal weights, the heavier will descend, the lighter will rise. In either case, the action of the balance is strictly determined; there is no room for liberty.

The reasoning of the determinists is, we repeat, irreproachable. However, the conclusion is not, for the point of departure of the reasoning is false. What attracts the human will towards particular goods is not their intrinsic value, but the Good in itself that they reflect. Now this reflection is of necessity limited, incomplete; it does not possess the fullness belonging only to the Good in itself, and consequently is far from being able to satisfy all our desires, the whole effort of our will. And being inferior to this will, it lacks the necessary force to excite it entirely, to completely determine it, so it remains partly "indifferent".

That the particular good be a little smaller or a little larger, does not affect the matter. The particular good, whatever it may be, always remains out of all proportion to the total energy of the will and completely unable to put it to work entirely, to determine it. For the will to be able to exert

¹⁰ Leibnitz believed that two things, absolutely and in all things alike (indistinguishable), while being intrinsically possible, could not exist in this world. Because, if they existed, God and Nature would be acting unreasonably in treating one differently from the other (*Cinquième Lettre de Leibniz à Clarke*, n. 21, 26); their creation would be "contrary to the Divine wisdom" (*ibid.* 25) and to the "great principle of reason" (*principe de la raison*) (*ibid.* n. 26). See also *Quatrième Lettre à Clarke*, n. 4-7.

The reasoning of Leibnitz does not hold good. He supposes that God in His outward activity is subjected to the "principle of the best" (*principe du meilleur*). This principle is false, as we shall see further on. Cf. the chapter on *Optimism*.

itself towards the particular good that intelligence does not present to it as indissolubly bound to the Good in itself, the initiative must come from the will itself. This initiative is the dominant character, the essence even of the free will. And we understand now why it is that free will can never work without a "sufficient reason". This sufficient reason is above all the initiative of which we have just spoken.¹¹

7. The Good in itself, the supreme object of the will, is it not God? Here a distinction is necessary. If we consider the ontological order, the Good in itself is really God. What we have said before makes any explanation superfluous. Thus all things, left to their natural tendencies, are carried to God.

This is true also for the will considered in its primordial tendency, which the ancients were accustomed to call "the natural longing" (*appetitus naturalis*). This is constantly turned towards God, the supreme Immovable Mover.

But let us note here a point of great importance. This natural tendency is not a particular act. It is rather the will itself in so far as it is considered in its essential or transcendental relation to "the adequate object" of its unlimited capacity. It "naturally" tends to God as matter tends to form, potency to the act which constitutes its normal completion, its crowning.

But let us pass on to the "actual" tendencies of the will, "the elicited tendencies". They are governed, as we know, by knowledge. Now God, while being infinite, does not appear as "the Good in itself" in the knowledge which we possess in this life. Indeed, the possession of this infinite Good does not make man perfectly happy here below; it does not deliver him from the weight of his body which chains

¹¹ This initiative itself is not deprived of the light of intelligence. It is not a "leap in the dark". See our *Psychologia Metaphysica, de judicio practico* (Romae, 1948), pp. 353-354.

him to matter, to the actual world, source of so much bitter deception; it does not shelter him from human malice, from the voracity of animals, from the severity of physical forces; it does not exempt him from the necessity of suffering and death. On the contrary, the possession of this supreme Good becomes more often for man, given the circumstances of his earthly existence, a new source of trouble, since it calls on him to renounce all that is pleasing to his senses, to accept sacrifice.

God, in his infinite perfection, contains all good, and consequently also the good of man. But man does not see this because it is not given to him to reach God by an "intuition" but only by "reasoning"; he knows Him by "analogy"—*in specie et aenigmatibus*—and this kind of knowledge is very imperfect, as we have seen before.

The "Good in itself" is an expression similar to the "man in himself", for example. But the "man in himself" is the ideal type of Man, his apogee, his fulfilment, his completion. This ideal type is still man, but it is conceived "abstractly" in so far as it represents a general idea of man.¹² In the same way, "the Good in itself" is a universal concept that represents the absolute nature of Good.

That which is "full" can receive no more; also that which serves as a "measure" is unalterable, of a unique type. And that is why the Good in itself does not admit of any idea of change or progress. It does not vary, it does not increase. It is the counterpart of the immutability of eternal things, of perfect things, of the End.

We see then that finite being can never attain to its ideal. The ideal should always float above it to draw it from the things that surround it, to attract it unceasingly towards in-

¹² See Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* i. 6. 1096^a 34-1096^b 3. See also *Metaph.* 986^a 22-26; 1028^b 21-24; 1072^b 30-1073^a 3.

finity. The characteristic feature of the being who aspires to his ideal is to live in continual tension, in constantly renewed effort to surpass himself. Moreover, it would be abnormal if the material world could fully satisfy such a being. Anyone who could declare himself entirely satisfied with it would be a child or a lunatic.

8. It is not without reason that we have waited so long to describe the Good in itself. This idea is for us of great importance. In its light we can measure the vast horizons of the empire of Evil. It is, indeed, in the man capable of perceiving Good in itself that Evil attains its zenith.

The plant, while suffering from Evil, has no idea of it. The animal knows it, but only in an imperfect way; only physical, material pain (pain exclusively related to touch) affects it. And again, it can only feel it at the moment when it occurs; it cannot hasten or retard it by one second; with the cessation of the feeling of touch it infallibly disappears. Limited in duration, it is also limited in space. It is localized in the organ that receives the excitation from outside, or, at most (by virtue of the law of "irradiation" of sensations in the organism), in those that are tied to that organ by the sensitive nerves.

Man, on the contrary, is subject to every kind of Evil. He suffers not only from physical evils but also from moral; not only from the Evil which attacks him at the present moment but also from that which threatens him in the future, whether that future be near or far or even in eternity. He suffers from past evil as well as from present evil. For once Evil has reached the spiritual faculties, it takes root there and continues in the form of regret or remorse. Man is subject to individual and to social evil. He feels as much the evil that strikes his family, his friends, his nation, his country as that which affects him personally. Some men bear their own

sorrows with more courage than those that befall their near relatives. Man is subject to fictitious evil as well as to real. The difference between the two is merely exterior; it only depends on the object; from the subjective viewpoint, none exists; fictitious evil is still a true evil. It is sometimes even more painful than what is called "real".

Man can suffer not only from tactile sensations, as can the animal, but through all his senses, without exception. Grief can reach his imagination and his memory, for these two faculties do not always work at man's will. And that is what makes him suffer. Even intelligence, the noblest and highest faculty of man, is not free from suffering. Like the magnetic needle that turns constantly towards the North, the intelligence orientates itself obstinately towards truth. This tendency is in its nature, and one can do nothing against nature. Now, how often is our mind plunged into ignorance, into doubt, into perplexity? Intelligence tends desperately towards the clear light of day that only the immediate evidence procured by intuition could give it. Now very often it must be content with a twilight glimmer of partial or desultory knowledge and with faith.

Thus all the wealth of man, all his faculties, are subject to suffering and to evil. And his suffering is rendered more acute by the consciousness that he has of it; he knows that he suffers, he knows that he is unhappy. The animal also suffers, but it does not say to itself: "I suffer. I am going to die". It does not know the "I". The suffering of the animal is therefore less penetrating, less profound, less immanent, and only affects the surface, so to speak, of its being. It is impersonal and evaporates quickly. Man, on the contrary, reflecting on his "ego", accentuates the weight of the evil that oppresses him; he even has the sad faculty of being able to foresee Evil before it reaches him and so to intensify his

grief.¹³ In the abyss that he creates around his Evil, nonentity sometimes appears to him as the only way of escape, as a good thing! He comes to desire it. . . . Man alone is capable of suicide.

9. And here is a remarkable fact: the more a being rises in the hierarchy of life, the more he is subject to Evil. Evil increases in proportion to the nobility and dignity of the creature. It is the noblest creature, the one rightly or wrongly called *primogenita creaturarum*, it is Man who suffers the most. "When, in order to know my individual place in my species, I consider the diverse ranks and men who hold them, what a spectacle", J. J. Rousseau said. "The picture of Nature showed me only harmony and proportion, that of humanity only confusion and disorder! Concord exists between the elements, and men are in chaos! Animals are happy, only their king is miserable. O Wisdom, where are your laws? O Providence, is it thus that you govern the world? Beneficent Being, what has become of your power? I see Evil on the earth".¹⁴

Since we are concerned with Man in general, we ought to add that all men are not equally sensitive to suffering. Egoists, for example, are scarcely touched by any suffering that does not affect them personally. They practically ignore the sufferings of their neighbors. Those persons whose mental development has been arrested show much resemblance to primitives and to children when they reach adult age. Like them, they are engrossed in the present and consequently do not suffer from anticipation of pain in the future nor from

¹³ We know that a man afflicted with insomnia is especially conscious of his suffering during the night, and this is because nothing happens during the long hours to distract his attention. The patient who has twice undergone a surgical operation usually suffers more the second time because he pictures the details to himself in advance.

¹⁴ See Ch. Renouvier, *Histoire et solution des problèmes métaphysiques* (Paris, Alcan, 1901), p. 334.

pain that they have suffered in the past; they live in the present, they suffer in the present. Those persons whom we speak of in current language as "hardened to evil" (and who are generally rather rough individuals) have less fine nerves, less delicate sensibility. To make them suffer, they must be shaken somewhat severely; ordinary stimulants will leave them unmoved. Ed. v. Hartmann said: "It is the coarse and primitive people who are the most satisfied, and among cultivated people the least instructed classes are so. With the progress of instruction of a people, its discontent increases, as has been well established".¹⁵ "Manufactures, steamers, railways, and telegraphs have not yet done anything for the felicity of humanity".¹⁶ "With the progressive development of humanity, not only an increase of needs is produced . . . but also that of the sensibility of the nervous system and of the culture of the mind. Consequently, there also appears an excess of pain felt with regard to pleasure experienced and the demolition of the illusion, that is to say, the consciousness of the misery of life, of the vanity of most pleasures".¹⁷

But why multiply examples? One suffers less because one is a little less of a man. Suffering increases in direct ratio to the perfection of the man. The more an individual realizes the "measure" of a man, the more susceptible he is to suffering. In rising towards the ideal, one discovers always new, always unexpected, prospects of suffering; horizons always vaster, always wider open to Evil. The scruples of the saints are a striking example of this: the "little" imperfections, the peccadillos they were always discovering because of their own

¹⁵ See Élie Metchnikoff, *Études sur la nature humaine, Essais de philosophie optimiste*, 2d ed. (Paris, 1903), p. 241.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 242. J. J. Rousseau, Tolstoi, Brunetière, and many other authors speak of science in the same way.

moral elevation, caused them extreme torment. In the same way, whoever thoroughly studies science discovers more and more reasons for doubt, for painful perplexity; he sees new problems always arising that seem to hide new mysteries, and this perpetual anxiety is also painful.

10. The Hierarchy of living beings, the Hierarchy of Evil—there is a strange parallelism in Nature. It is pure chance, perhaps. But this chance would then enjoy singular prerogatives: it would be steady, universal; it would allow of general and sure foreknowledge and by that might serve as the foundation of a science. Now such prerogatives, we can clearly see, are incompatible with the idea we have of chance. Chance is always something that cannot be foreseen; it has no rules; there is nothing stable, permanent in it. Chance is an exception to the normal course of things.

No. The parallelism that we have just made clear is not the effect of chance. It is a law of Nature. Let us remember this conclusion, for it will help us to understand the finality of Evil and to discover its origin.

PART II
THE FINALITY OF EVIL

PROLEGOMENA

1. Evil—we have just said—is not found in Nature accidentally. It is not simply due to chance. It is a law.

Now if we say Law, we say Necessity. Evil in Nature is then a Necessity. But what is Necessity? We can reply in a general way: it is that which allows a thing to exist, and without which it would not exist. There are, then, things in Nature that can only exist, thanks to Evil.

Evil becomes, then, a source of Good? How are we to understand this? The thornbush cannot bear ears of corn. Now there is a still greater difference between Good and Evil than between these two plants. The essence of the thorn and that of the wheat differ, it is true, but they are not entirely hostile to one another, while Good and Evil are, as we know, antagonistic. There is hostility between them; what we affirm in the name of the one, we must deny in the name of the other; they destroy each other.

2. This shows us clearly that the way in which Evil can produce Good cannot be compared to the process by which living beings engender other living beings, that is, by virtue of a “univocal causality”. The ways of Evil, on the other hand, are in no way comparable to the actions that cause the rain to help the development of vegetables (equivocal causality). Evil is neither a substance nor a being, and consequently does not possess any special quality. No dynamic force emanates from it, no power of action, since all special qualities, dynamic forces and powers of action, are different forms of the expansion of the being itself.

That is why Evil can do nothing in the way of efficient causality. For analogous reasons, Evil cannot play in any way the part of formal cause. Formal causality consists in the form giving itself, communicating itself, to another being to complete that other being, to perfect it. Heat causes the iron to become hot by introducing something of itself into the iron, by incorporating itself as its "form." Now form is precisely that which is lacking in Evil, as we have just said.

Neither can Evil be a material cause of good in Nature, since it is only a "privation" of something. But privation, as the name indicates, cannot be that from which anything could be obtained.

Finally, the causality by virtue of which Evil might produce some good in Nature cannot be of the final order, for the final cause is in itself good. It produces an effect in so far as good is loved, desired. Now, Evil being the contrary of Good can never be loved or desired.

Therefore if Evil contributes to the Good in Nature, it does not do so in a direct, positive manner. In other words, it does not act as a cause *per se* but in an indirect and negative way. It intervenes as a cause *per accidens*.

We do not want to go into an explanation here of the nature of the cause *per accidens*. Let us only note that it must not be confused with the instrumental cause, as it sometimes is. The latter has a positive, true influence, although it is subordinate to the principal cause, and that is why it always leaves an indelible mark. In the letters that you write with a pen on a sheet of paper, you will find indications of the type of pen you wrote with. By examining the writing, you can get a fair idea of its shape, its strength, etc. The indications in question are found in each one of the letters that have been written, for not one has been written without the help of the pen. The influence of the pen on the result is

therefore indispensable. It is a question here of a true, physical cause. The cause *per accidens*, on the contrary, has no physical influence. It cooperates in the effect only by way of a "condition" or of "opportunity". This is why it creates nothing in Nature, in spite of the fact that many things in Nature would never have seen the light of day if such causes had not existed.

The finality of Evil thus understood flourishes in every domain of life, on every step of the ladder of being. We can easily see this by looking at the three kingdoms of Nature.

THE FINALITY OF EVIL IN THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM

1. In the vegetable kingdom, Evil shows itself, as we have pointed out before, by a purely organic imperfection, a lack of harmony and equilibrium in the functioning of the organs, an attack on the integrity of the living beings, as mutilation or death. What is the finality of these evils?

To answer this question we must have recourse to a fiction. Let us imagine that at a given moment all evil is banished from the vegetable kingdom; the vegetables all reach the perfection of their development, their organization and strength. They are sheltered from any attack on their integrity, they no longer die. Nature is prodigal in her care of them, procures for them an abundance of all that is necessary, or simply useful, to them, and asks no sacrifice from them in exchange.

But how would the existence of animals be possible in a world where Nature gave everything to plants without asking anything from them in return? Certainly plants render animals a great service by releasing the oxygen (with the help of the rays of the sun), since oxygen is one of the elements without which animals cannot live. But that is not enough for the life of animals. Moreover, deprived of chlorophyll, that is found only in green plants, animals cannot nourish themselves on solar energy. They must feed on organisms.

Nature, then, in order to keep all harm from the vegetables, ought to destroy the animal kingdom from top to bottom and also the human species. Before making so grave a decision Nature—we must hope at least—will arm herself with good sense and give up a partiality exclusively vegetable; she will not coldly decree a terrible massacre of animals and men, who are the most perfect works and glorious conclusion of her long effort.

Let us add that such massacre would not be without annoying consequences for the vegetables themselves, because animals and men supply them with carbon.¹

But is the wisdom of Nature perfect, infinite? We know that this is a matter of discussion among scholars; many of them point out several “errors” of Nature and refuse to credit her with perfect wisdom. We think the question of little interest. For Nature to make a choice between the alternatives that we have conjectured, perfect wisdom would not be required; common sense would be sufficient. Now can we reasonably deny to Nature all common sense?

We see, then, what is the principal finality of Evil in the vegetable kingdom: it is one of the necessary conditions for the existence of animals and men.

To assure this finality, Nature has allowed animals and men a crushing superiority over the vegetables. She has endowed them with knowledge and will before which the

¹ Carbon is not furnished by animals and men alone. Vegetables furnish it too, because they all “breathe”. Now respiration implies the production of carbonic acid, which follows the absorption of the atmospheric oxygen. Moreover, this work is not reserved for only certain parts of the plant. The whole organism takes an active part in it and accomplishes it night and day. Nevertheless the work which the green parts pursue in the light of day is beyond any comparison more intense than that of respiration. It is for this reason that the production of oxygen is much greater than that of carbonic acid. This is the sense—let us hasten to add—in which the vegetables “purify” the atmosphere and “enrich” it with oxygen.

vegetables are helpless. They cannot even fly from the attacks of which they are victims. They cannot move from one spot to another to try to find some better place to live in. They do not choose their home; they grow where their seed has fallen and remain there all their life.

2. The finality of Evil in the vegetable kingdom finds a startling expression in the following fact: vegetables, as we know, are endowed with prodigious fecundity, out of all proportion to the extent of their actual reproduction, to their special needs, to any conceivable use; a fact that has shocked more than one scholar and has caused Nature to be accused of "extravagance". But these scholars have been too much occupied with the explanation of the vegetable by itself. If we take in a larger horizon, if we place ourselves at the point of view of the whole of Nature, the difficulty disappears at once: the superabundance of germs, of fruits, of seeds, is useless to the vegetable, they say. Perhaps so, but it is certainly of great benefit to other living beings, animals and men. It is thanks to this very superabundance that they exist, and that which is an evil in the inferior regions of being proves to be a good in the superior world. We said that evil is relative. As such it may be the object of an effort of Nature, a "medium" for her use.

Let us add that this superabundance of germs, fruits, and seeds is not wholly without value for the vegetables; it fertilizes the earth where they grow. The evils of vegetables have then their finality.

Let us be allowed a digression. We often go into raptures over the beauty of vegetables and we are not wrong in doing so. The humble "lilies of the field", do they not surpass the splendor of "Solomon in all his glory"?

But why was this beauty given to flowers and vegetables? For their own satisfaction? But they do not know how to

appreciate beauty, they cannot recognize it. How can we then reasonably explain Nature's action in creating beauty in beings to whom she refuses the possibility of enjoying it? What advantage can they draw from it? The botanist will tell us that it attracts animals, and animals render vegetables a great service with regard to fertilization. We answer that it is an illusion that animals are attracted by beauty, because animals, having no disinterested sentiments, pay no heed to beauty. What attracts them is always sense pleasure and this has nothing in common with aesthetic enjoyment. To inform the animal of an opportunity offered it for the satisfaction of its appetite, it was quite sufficient for Nature to give the vegetables striking colors, agreeable scents, etc. It was quite unnecessary to adorn them magnificently, to give them splendor.

Moreover, certain naturalists teach us that many insects which visit flowers are very shortsighted. It is for this reason that they certainly are less attracted by the colors of the flowers than by their odors. One may even ask if the colors of plants exercise any attraction to insects. Indeed, more than once it has been demonstrated that bees and wasps systematically disdain the most brilliantly colored artificial flowers. Moreover, mosses and ferns are multiplied by means of spores; pine trees and fir trees are fertilized by the wind. Now they also have brilliant colors.

To understand the reason for the beauty in Nature, we must relate it to some creature capable of recognizing it, to Man. But if beauty is to be of value only to man, what does Nature expect of him? What must he supply in return? Should he give all his care to the plants that excel in beauty, cultivate them, protect them from the inclemency of the weather, from wind and sun? Here we meet with a difficulty. All plants do not have the same degree of beauty, and those

that are beautiful do not always possess the greatest intrinsic value. Under these conditions, beauty would impoverish or lessen the entire perfection of Nature!

No, it is not with the sole aim of procuring good to the vegetable that Nature bestows beauty on it and sends it to man. It is not the vegetable that is the principal object, it is Man, who alone is capable of deriving profit from the beauty of the works of Nature, in which nothing is sterile, nothing is without reason.

Such is the meaning of the finality of plants, according to the only possible interpretation of Nature's intentions. They must serve the noblest, the most finished creatures. The Evil that they contain has no other purpose.

3. To sum up: The evils that we meet with in the vegetable world bear the mark of an evident finality. But this finality is, above all, exterior; they aim less at the being suffering the evil than at others belonging to the superior kingdoms.

The vegetable is an empire, we said before. But this empire is not closed, that is, it has not its special reason for being, its last object in itself; this goes beyond the vegetable kingdom. To attain its object, the vegetable must cross the frontiers of its own empire and strive to go further. Abandoning its own domain, it in some ways abdicates its sovereignty which made of it an end and becomes again a simple "medium."

That is the way in which the vegetable tends towards its last end. The evils that it suffers are the expression of its condition of "medium". It spends itself for the good of others, the supreme purpose of the effort of Nature.

THE FINALITY OF EVIL IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

1. Let us now study the finality of Evil in the animal kingdom.

The special Evil of the animal is pain. What is the finality of this evil? To answer this question it would be well to have recourse again to an image. Let us suppose that Nature, touched by the sufferings of the animal, abolishes pain, and let us consider the consequences of such an act. An animal finds a flaming fire in its path. It sees the fire, it smells the smoke. But this does not seem to it unpleasant, it does not frighten it, so it goes on its way. The heat increases, reaches the animal, and begins to scorch its skin. The animal does not feel any pain and goes still nearer to the fire which . . . consumes it! Such would be the consequences of an excess of sentimentality on the part of Nature. To save animals from suffering would be to take their lives.

The result would be, of course, still more disastrous if Nature, seized with tenderness for animals, decided to make all the sensations they experienced pleasant to them. They would then rush into a fire, they would seek death, it would be a universal suicide.

We see, then, that suffering is one of the essential conditions for the very existence of the animal kingdom. If there were no suffering, animals would not exist because pain is for them the subjective measure of the Evil threatening

them; it is their criterion of Evil. Such is, then, the principal finality of suffering. Without being good in itself it can nevertheless procure for the animal many precious benefits. If it could ever become "good" for the animal, in the sense of being pleasant for it, it would lead the animal to its death.

2. Let us notice here a curious fact. We can quite well "accustom" ourselves, "adapt" ourselves, to different sensations. If we plunge one hand into too hot water, we feel the heat keenly at first but after a few moments our hand becomes accustomed to the heat, we no longer feel it. Sour fruits often lose their acidity in the measure that they are eaten. The strongest odors cease to be noticed after we have smelled them for some moments. When passing from darkness into a brightly lighted room, we are for the first moment entirely dazzled; we see nothing. But this passes after some seconds. Sometimes we try to find our umbrella, which is really suspended on our arm, or our hats, which are on our heads. All these facts constitute so many proofs of adaptation to sensations.

But so far as pain itself is concerned, can we "adapt" ourselves to it? A certain number of psychologists are of this opinion. Just as our hand became accustomed to hot water, we can end by ceasing to feel a pain that is too prolonged.

We do not share this opinion. The psychologists we mentioned do not seem to understand the true meaning of the question. Pain, like all affections, since it is an accompaniment of sensation (in the sense defined above), inevitably disappears the moment that the sensation to which it was attached passes from our consciousness. No doubt is possible in regard to this. That is why when we ask if one can adapt oneself to pain, our question means this: is it possible that pain, by virtue of a kind of contracted habit, changes to a different degree in becoming agreeable or at least insensible.

If we consult experience, the answer is in the negative. Pain rather increases gradually as it is prolonged, it takes possession of the subject more and more profoundly, and ends by poisoning him completely. The sufferer shows no sign of losing interest little by little in his pain. On the contrary, he becomes more and more conscious of it with the passing of time.

This statement is not unimportant. The criterion of value that pain is, fundamentally shows itself to be at the same time objective and tenacious. It does not change at the will of the subject; it does not depend entirely on him. It is imposed on him. Pain therefore possesses a finality that is natural and objective.

3. But our conclusion is still open to objections. We shall be told, for example, of illnesses, sometimes very serious, that were not accompanied by any pain, while pathological affections of no importance to the organism caused acute suffering. We may quote, for instance, in the first category, the silent formation of certain neoplasms; in the second, the decay of the teeth. If pain is a "criterion of value", on the part of the animal, of the evil that threatens it, it is in this case singularly at fault; it sounds the alarm for an insignificant evil and is silent when a mortal invader is already at work.

The partisans of the finality of pain have tried to refute this objection in different ways. We sympathize with their attempts because they strengthen our own opinion. We should be happy to be able to approve of them entirely. That is, unfortunately, impossible. *Amicus Plato, magis amica veritas*. The attempts in question do not seem to us effective against the objection mentioned. Here is the explanation that is the most popular today, that of Max Scheler. "That which is advantageous and that which is inconvenient in

what concerns life in general, of which pleasure and displeasure are the psychic reflections," he says, "are not always so in what concerns the life of the organism considered as an individual, but more often remain so relative to the activity of that organic part in a momentary condition that is . . . subject to the excitation. The periodical inferior feelings, especially the affective sensations, do not deceive us as to the value of the excitation. Their part, however, is that of strongly partial and improvident witnesses. A drink of water helps for only a moment the vital activity of the organs that are directly excited, even if its action should be harmful for the organism as a whole".¹

How could Max Scheler continue to speak of the natural finality of pain, we ask, if he admits elsewhere that its effect "for the organism considered as an individual" could be harmful? For his solution to be of value, Max Scheler should logically admit that what takes priority over the organism are the parts, the organs, and that, consequently, the organism itself is nothing more than a simple "aggregate". It is only thus that we can understand the antagonism in the heart of the same individual between the natural finality of the parts and that of the whole.² Max Scheler has made some concessions to his opponent on the main point and from these it is quite evident that his solution is a lame one.

¹ Max Scheler, *Le sens de la souffrance*, Traduit par P. Klossowski, Paris, Éd. Montaigne (sans date), p. 6.

² The fact that Max Scheler distinguishes "four deep layers of feelings" (sensations scattered and localized at the periphery of the organism, vital, psychic, religious of metaphysical order) does not change the question at all, for on his own admission "the psychic sentiments and the spiritual have not as their function to point out the advantage or disadvantage, the opportunity or the lack of opportunity, that we men share with the higher animals in this kind of existence". The sentiments that concern the problem of the finality of pain are, according to Scheler, the peripheral and vital sentiments. Now it is precisely these sentiments that Scheler calls "partial, improvident, harmful" for the organism as a whole.

What is the real reason for Max Scheler's failure? In our opinion, it is his wish to extend to man what is valid only for the animal kingdom. Pleasure and displeasure of the sensitive organs should both be, according to Scheler, judgments of value for man. Now it is just this idea that was condemned to failure. The judgment of value which pleasure or displeasure of the sensitive order furnishes is of no other kind than that which we commonly call "instinct". But it is only in the animal kingdom that instinct has unconditional value.³

In man, the part played by instinct is very small. It is insufficient to gain him his livelihood; children and insane persons can only live at the expense of others. It is even possible that the instincts of man are reduced to what is called in physiology "psychic reflexes", that is to say, to brusque movements, thoughtless but suitable, that under the influence of a stimulus given by the sensation suddenly manifest themselves in the organism, without hesitation, without the help

³ There is no lack of psychologists who affirm that man does not possess any instincts: in man, intelligence takes the place of instinct and has ousted it. This assertion seems to us a little too categorical. Certainly, if we think of adult man, it is difficult to see instinct operating in him. That is because the adult man, if he has moral and intellectual culture, represses his spontaneous desires, fancies, impulses, unconsidered actions and tries to direct and transform them by his intelligence, by good habits, by "acquired virtues". But with a man whose moral evolution is incomplete and who has not yet gained sufficient self-control, it is quite otherwise. A still better example is the child in whom intelligence has not yet dominated his faculties. We see him act in a manner that it would be difficult to explain without taking into account some rudimentary and incomplete instinct. Thus, for example, children manifest the same fears for certain animals, the same tastes for games, the same manner of constructing their languages, of chewing, of sucking, of walking, etc.

In our *Psicologia Experimental* we have distinguished two different senses of the term "instinct". In the proper sense instinct is an innate tendency to do some work, more or less complicated: to construct a honeycomb, a nest, and so on. This kind of instinct is very rudimentary and imperfect in man, as we have just seen. If, on the contrary, we take "instinct" in a broader sense of the word to signify every innate tendency, even the simplest, it is notably more perfect in man than in any other animal.

of any previous experience, and with equal perfection in all individuals belonging to the same species.

But it is not our intention to go deeply into the question of instinct in these pages. What we have just said is sufficient to justify what we have said before, that judgments of value in the form of pleasure or displeasure are not infallible in the case of men. A man may feel pain of a sensitive nature out of all proportion to the importance of the Evil that is threatening his organism, intense pain from a decayed tooth, and scarcely any pain from the formation of a deadly neoplasm. It is only with animals that such "judgments of value" prove to be naturally infallible.

We use the word "naturally" intentionally. It fixes the limits of these criteria. It is only under normal conditions, therefore, "natural conditions", that they are infallible. In abnormal circumstances, or artificially arranged circumstances, their infallibility is not guaranteed. For the criterion of value, as we have just said, is of the same nature as instinct. Now instinct, like a natural faculty, is not applied in all possible or imaginable circumstances, but only in natural circumstances. Surrounded by artificial conditions, it may be misled; it does not find its application there, it was not made for those conditions.

What we have just said shows the futility of the objections that some authors draw from the "aberrations of instinct". E. Metchnikoff tells us that monkeys poison themselves with "phosphorus matches and iodoform that they have succeeded in stealing". The aberrations of instinct in the choice of nourishment, he adds, are even more numerous with men. The child, as soon as he begins to walk, picks up all sorts of objects and puts them into his mouth. The grown man is urged by instinct to poison himself with alcohol, opium, morphia.

Certainly phosphorus matches are not a "natural" production! As to the child, he has no special instinct for "choice of nourishment" but simply the instinct to "eat". We may say the same of the grown man. Moreover, we have already seen that the special function of "instinctive" operations is their "usefulness" to the organism. Normally they act only under conditions where they can prove fruitful; when their operations are doomed, beforehand, to failure, instinct does not intervene.

We must refrain from too hasty conclusions based on analogies. Some external indications of pain in animals do not infallibly show that they are really suffering. "If one performs an operation of cerebation on an animal in a laboratory", says A. Le Grand, . . . "this animal with its nerve centers reduced to the spinal marrow, its bulb, and its protuberance no longer possesses the necessary apparatus for the production of sensations; now, if it is made to submit to some sharp stimulus, such as pricks, burns, or cuts, the animal reacts by a painful grin, by cries, by defensive movements, or by flight; these are simply reflexes giving a perfect pretense of conscious suffering. . . ." ⁴

Let us add that even in man there are organs which can be stabbed, cut, burned, without the subject's being conscious of these operations. Such are, e.g., the kidneys, liver, intestines, stomach, and so forth. Some scholars have even made the supposition that the pains which we sometimes feel in those organs do not come from them but from the external parietal peritonites, and from certain other organs (the mem-

⁴ Docteur André Le Grand, *La douleur*, Études Carmelit., Oct. 1936, p. 101 (in note). We will not affirm that animals deprived of the brain have no kind of consciousness. We only pretend that they have no normal, clear consciousness. But this does not diminish the practical value of our conclusions. The pain accompanied by such consciousness is very different from the pain we are speaking of.

branous stratifications and the serous of the diaphragm, e.g.).⁵

4. What we have just said clearly shows that pain in the animal kingdom is not sterile. It plays the part of the "judgments of value", thanks to which the animals estimate all that would be harmful in order to escape from it. Pain is therefore a guardian and a guide; without it, animals could not continue to exist. Its finality is of first importance.

Certainly, defense of the organism can often be obtained without a painful sensation. Many reflex movements well known to psychologists are the best proof of this: a certain blinking of the eyelids, dilation or shrinking of the vaso-motor nerves, increase of arterial pressure, etc. These reflexes can be quite unconscious and therefore without pain. The reactions that some lower animals offer to excitation, the precise and strong movements that a person under chloroform will make during an operation, are included in this category. Now we may reasonably admit that many animals defend themselves by simple reflexes and therefore without pain.

However, this manner of defending themselves does not seem to be sufficient for the higher animals which, because of their rapid movement from place to place, are exposed to many more dangers. Indeed, the defense that follows the excitation often comes too late to be efficacious. To guard against the dangers that they encounter every minute, they should practice a preventive defense. This can only take the form of fear of the pain once experienced.⁶

⁵ It is more probable that the visceral organs are not deprived of all sensibility. But this is particularly reduced; it responds only to the "adequate" or "normal" excitements, that is, to the excitements which come from causes interior to the organisms. They do not respond to the "inadequate", "abnormal" excitements which come from outside, from surgical interference, for example.

⁶ Many dangers are avoided by animals, by the lower as well as the higher, instinctively without any pain.

5. But the part pain plays does not end there. One might say that pain is for animals the school of life. A severe school, it is true, but a very useful one. Indeed, it is on the existence of pain that the training of animals is chiefly based. If we want to make an animal form some habit, accustom it to make certain movements, we show it first what it ought to do; then, each time that it obeys instructions cleverly, we reward it with a good mouthful of food or a caress. For every untimely movement, on the contrary, we inflict some physical pain. The suffering that it experiences serves as a "criterion of value": it is intended to make it understand that the movement it had just made was bad and that it must guard against it in the future. Thus the animal, without thinking it over, will do all it can to correct itself; it will make natural efforts to acquire the desired movements. But these movements are only desired by the master. The only desire of the animal is to avoid pain, a pain that is associated in its memory with certain movements. That is the way in which pain becomes, for an animal, a fruitful stimulant, the road to progress and the path to perfection.

The training of which we spoke, Nature provides in her own way and during the entire life of the animal. Placing it among conditions of existence that are nearly always very hard, she incites it to action, obliges it to make efforts, and tears it from a state of inactivity, an unlucky idleness, because in the living being inaction ends in degeneracy, in weakness and in death. The powers of the animal are not exercised in a sterile manner. Action develops them and it is in their development that they are perfected. Little by little the animal becomes stronger, cleverer, more able to endure; in the "fight for life" it will be better armed because trained and adapted to it.

We know that animals reduced to a state of domesticity in which they have less to fight, less to suffer (for all that is necessary for their existence is brought to them by the hand of man), invariably show tendencies to atrophy and degeneracy. Savage animals of the same species are much stronger.

Thus we see again that pain raises the animal towards its own perfection, a perfection that it does not know or desire. In spite of this, Nature leads it there. She is mother and educator for the animal; a very stern mother sometimes, but always prudent and careful, who never allows it to become languid through inaction and watches constantly over its improvement.

6. We shall be asked, perhaps: but does the good procured indirectly by the Evil really compensate the animal for the direct effects of this Evil? This way of putting the question is very modern. There is, today, a mania for wanting to reduce everything to mathematical valuation. But there are things in this world that cannot be estimated in figures. Everything is not exclusively quantitative. Where could we find a standard measurement for Evil and for the Good that it might occasionally bring? There could never be question of anything but moral valuation in this matter. A scale for weighing evils and benefits has not yet been invented, and for such a sensational discovery the people of today seem to be ill prepared.⁷

The limits of Evil in the animal kingdom are very narrow. Only the present Evil is perceived. The only object is the individual that suffers. It only affects the sense of touch. With the animal, consciousness of the Evils that attack it is obscure and vague; it is difficult for us to realize this. Their dim consciousness cannot be compared to that of a man enlightened by intelligence and reason! It is a dull conscious-

⁷ See the chapter on "Pessimism", p. 182.

ness. Some psychologists compare it to that of somnambulists or hypnotized persons. That is going too far. Somnambulists keep a human consciousness, although a reduced one; a consciousness which retains the knowledge of "self". The somnambulist can still say to himself, "I suffer, I die." The most perfect animal is incapable of that. The consciousness of the animal rather resembles, in our opinion, that of a man in a deep sleep. If one pricks his hand, he reacts at once; he withdraws the hand pricked and changes his position. He has then felt the pain. One might also compare the consciousness of the animal to that of a man who is dead drunk.

All this concerns the higher animals. But what of the embryonic consciousness in the lower animals? It would be difficult to explain to what point it is reduced. It seems impossible—remark I. Ioteyko and M. Stefanowska—to suppose that they have a real consciousness of pain. Normann, who has extensively studied the reactional movements in the inferior animals, believes that the contortions observed after the severing of some parts are no proof of pain; they are pure reflexes. Bethe used to cut off the abdomens of bees without their ceasing to suck honey from the flowers. J. Loeb cut the plaars in half; their front parts continued to progress without any modification in their behavior.⁸

In any case, when one sets up an impartial balance sheet of the pains suffered by animals and the advantages that they draw from them, one must agree that they should not complain. It is thanks to pain that they know existence. And existence procures for them, all things considered, more pleasure than suffering. This, as we have just seen, is very dim and ephemeral, very like that which might affect, with-

⁸ I. Ioteyko et M. Stefanowska, *Psycho-physiologie de la douleur* (Paris, 1909), pp. 163-164.

out awaking, a sleeper overcome by fatigue or a drunken man in a stupor.

7. Animals, not being endowed with intelligence, cannot be considered as "persons". That is why their reason for being is not in themselves. Like vegetables, they tend towards a superior being who, by his intelligence, will know how to use them for a more perfect good. Thus what is an end for animals is only a means that man profits by. The bitter complaints of Voltaire on "the repugnant carnage constantly seen in our butcheries" and his angry revolt against our necessity for "feeding continually upon corpses" (dead animals)⁹ do not merit refutation. They are only sentimentality; they disregard the voice of reason.

⁹ See Ch. Renouvier, *Histoire et solution des problèmes métaphysiques* (Paris, 1901), p. 326.

THE FINALITY OF EVIL IN THE REALM OF MAN

1. As to the finality of Evil with regard to the kingdom of Man, we can make a distinction between several aspects of importance. First of all, Evil recalls to man his immortal destiny.

The Good proportioned to man, his end, is the Good in itself. This Good considered relatively is—we can say—still the man but conceived of abstractedly, having reached the complete realization of his purpose, in a word, “ideal man”.

It is hardly necessary to add that such a man has never existed; even in the God-Man there was sorrow, suffering, and death. Now none of this should touch the “ideal man” as our intelligence conceives of him, as our will strives to realize him.

Let us consider this ideal of man.

The ideal man represents the consummation of all our natural tendencies taken together. It does not depend on us to create this ideal at our pleasure or to abstain from doing so. Man is born with this ideal, as he is born with a certain nature that is especially his own, and his effort in this sense is self-imposed just as his natural inclinations are. This aspiration that cannot be coerced comes then from the Author of all things; it is the will of God. It is God who unceasingly incites man to the pursuit of the ideal of perfection.

But it would be impossible for God to direct man towards nonentity, so the ideal of man is certainly not a fiction. It is a positive and true possibility. On what is it founded? Its foundation is of the same nature as that of the "possibles", the "essences", and the "universals". It is in God Himself.

2. All ideals are not equivalent. For example, that of the plant does not contain knowledge nor the sensation of pleasure; on the contrary, it excludes them; for a plant that possessed the faculty of knowing, and of feeling pleasure, would by that very faculty deprive itself of its own essence and therefore cease to exist.

The ideal of the animal involves knowledge and the search for pleasure. But this knowledge and this pleasure are purely "sensitive"; it is only a matter of a faculty essentially organic and, consequently, corruptible and mortal. The ideal of the animal does not include immortality. Such an outlook would no doubt be repulsive to it. Indeed, as it possesses no immortal faculty, what sense could an eternally inactive, sterile, and stupid existence have for it?

Man's ideal does include the idea of immortality. How could it fail to do so, since his soul is immortal.

It is true that man is not pure spirit; he also possesses a body. He is then a composite being. On principle, that which is composed can be decomposed; man is then corruptible, mortal, and, as a matter of fact, he dies. However, this death cannot be final. Man, thanks to his natural intelligence, conceives immortality and desires it; he desires it for his whole being and not for a part of himself. It is a wish for complete resurrection that animates him; he wants to live again in his body. This resurrection is not an impossibility in principle, since all things are possible with God. Besides, this would not be, strictly speaking, a miracle, because this divine intervention would not be "exceptional" but would be the

rule. It would be the fulfilment of the natural desires that God has placed in human nature, and therefore not a question of a voluntary favor nor of a true "grace".¹

But whatever one may say of the resurrection of the body in the natural order, it is certain that the soul of man is immortal and that in it and by it man lives eternally. His existence on earth is in view of a future life that is its natural and necessary "complement". That is the true destiny of man, the reason for his existence and his purpose in life.

The life on earth is but a "movement" towards this end, a "means" towards this purpose. That is why one should never allow oneself to be engrossed in the present. Each must live for the future and work, thinking of eternity.

But man, because he is not pure spirit, is also an animal by his very nature. The animal in him never renounces sensible good. When it loses it, it considers itself lost forever, as it knows that it will not find it again in eternity; and then it thinks no more of eternity and does not look so high but lives absorbed in the present moment. That is the origin of the conflict that troubles the conscience of man, a conflict very embarrassing for all thinkers, the more so that it arises from the depths of man's being. This conflict is the source of many of the ills that afflict man. It is the terrible "law of the members" of which the Apostle complains: it is the slavery that weighs down the heathen: *video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*.

It is very obvious to the human being that there is a disproportion between him and the universe. The world is not made to his measure; it was undoubtedly not made for him, it is not an end for him.

¹ We are speaking from the philosophic viewpoint. The resurrection in question would be in the natural order. The resurrection that the Catholic religion teaches is strictly supernatural. It is in no sense due to man. It is a Divine favor.

Such is the finality of Evil for man; it recalls him to his higher destiny. The part that suffering plays is somewhat like that of miracles, which also only applies to our eternal destiny. A miracle is a means in the hands of God to attract the attention of man to His words and to His will. God speaks to man constantly, and constantly reveals to him His will, which is expressed in the natural laws that are binding on all creatures and by that essential order which is for us a true moral rule (*ordo essentialis rerum*). But just because of the persistence and the monotony of these laws, man sometimes becomes a little indifferent to their immense murmur, just as a miller becomes accustomed to the sound of his mill: so long as the everlasting tick-tack continues, our miller sleeps peacefully. If this lulling music stops, he awakes suddenly. So, when the normal course of things is suspended, the attention of man is awakened; anguish seizes him, he tries to discover the cause of such trouble. And it is then that the will of God is revealed to him.

We have said that there is an analogy between suffering and what is called "miracle". Suffering also disturbs a regular rhythm, upsets an established order, suspends continuity, breaks up equilibrium. And in so doing it also awakens Man and makes him feel the disproportion that exists between himself and the world he lives in, gives him the impression that he is a stranger there, that he is only beginning to acclimatize himself to it; that he might in the long run be contented there and sleep there in a gentle torpor. It shakes him, jostles him, and detaches him from the perishable to draw him towards that which is eternal, towards his high destiny. Daily experience confirms this; conversions, religious or moral, very often take place when sorrow appears. Yes, suffering recalls us to the eternity of our destiny as men. That is one of its purposes.

3. But there are others. For this kind of call not to remain useless, it must go beyond the sphere of knowledge into the depths of the affective life. Indeed, as we have said before, knowledge is an eminently passive condition; it leaves the soul indifferent and consequently inactive. Only the affection is a source of action in a being endowed with the psychic life; it is the affection which incites the soul to a dynamic attitude in the presence of Good and Evil; it is the affection which puts all the faculties of the soul to work. That is why the call "from on high" must reach to the affective life. It is thanks to the affections aroused by this call that the subject turns towards Good and away from Evil.

How can one give birth to these affections? Suffering will do that; if man does not give himself up to the sacred call, he will have to suffer for it. That is the metaphysics of what we have called "sanction". This acts somewhat in the same way that the sanction of pain is applied to animals. Of course, if we wish to make a comparison, we must add that it would be a training appropriate to human nature. We perceive this easily by the fact that the evils inflicted by sanction are not all of a sensorial kind, and they are not all inflicted at the very moment of the transgression of the law; usually they fall due in a rather distant future, after death, in eternity.

This sanction will take different forms: sometimes it will be "immanent", as, for example, in the case of illnesses that inevitably result from certain vices, or anxiety, remorse or regret for a fault committed; sometimes it will be a "positive" sanction carried out by society; confiscation of property, loss of liberty, of honor, sometimes even of life. However, such sanctions would not be sufficient. Vice does not always involve the forfeiture of bodily powers or deprivation of interior peace. And society does not always reprimand secret injustice nor estimate guilt exactly. Its estimates in this respect

are frequently very arbitrary; if the criminal wears a crown, he will find himself easily absolved of his crimes for that reason.

Nature cannot be contented with these spurious sanctions of human justice. She has to find one that is valid for everyone and for always. This sanction is just, for it is applied *ad aequalitatem*. It is inevitable, for it pursues the guilty beyond the grave into eternity. That is, in broad lines, the sanction of the natural law. Here is sufficient food for thought to make the most heedless reflect. Such a punishment has enough force to place a salutary curb on all temptations. The resounding catastrophes that occur from time to time in this world—earthquakes, cyclones, tornados, etc.—increase in man the feeling of absolute dependence with regard to God, and a right idea of divine power and justice.

That is the second finality of suffering: it turns man away from Evil in a way that is efficacious and appropriate to the nature of a reasonable being; it forces him to his ideal, to his good.

4. But there is a third: suffering is an abundant source of merit gained for eternity.

The sanction has two aspects; one negative and the other positive. Whoever does not respond to the divine call and escape from his inferior nature to the ideal, will have to bear the consequences, we have said. That is the negative aspect. But, on the contrary, whoever responds to it submissively, gives himself wholly to it without faltering and to the end, will be rewarded for all eternity. That is the positive aspect of the sanction of the natural law.

We have now defined Merit. It is the instrument that allows us to acquire the greatest good; but we can possess this instrument only at the price of suffering and sacrifice. Whatever some modern moralists may say (those, e.g., imbued

with the ideas of Kant on the categorical imperative as the only reason for our moral actions), the motive of "merit", even when it is explicitly the aim of the will, has nothing degrading for man; on the contrary, it is noble and worthy. We can only agree with these moralists in that it is not the most perfect motive for moral action.

But that which is not "the most perfect" is not imperfect, in the strict meaning of the word, unless we want to identify the expression "perfect" with "the most perfect". That is only a trifling question of words. In a similar case, we would simply make the same reservations with regard to the terminology used that we have made on the subject of the expression "metaphysical evil", used by Campanella and by Leibnitz.

The verbal convention identifying "perfect" with "the most perfect" is of little interest in regard to the main point of the question. Such a use of words in itself is neither true nor false. Neither truth nor error rests in words, but in judgments. However, this way of speaking tends to confuse ideas; it suggests that what is not "the most perfect" is bad for man; and that is inadmissible. Indeed, that which is "the most perfect" is not alone in being perfect. That which is perfect for man is that which completes and finishes him, brings him nearer to his ideal and tends to assure him of the possession of that "Good in itself" towards which he is straining. Now, merit (in the sense in which the pious soul understands the word) does not imply anything incompatible with the Good in itself. This merit is Heaven, that is to say, God Himself appearing in the future life. Now, God, thus thought of, does not offer anything imperfect in the usual meaning of the word, nor anything bad for Man. God could not contain anything incompatible with the ideal of Man, nor anything unworthy or degrading for Man.

5. Lastly, let us consider the fourth finality of Evil in the life of Man.

To realize his end, the living being must act. The end for the living being is its own perfection; this can be accomplished only by its immanent actions; it could not be the result of a simple exchange of encounters with the surrounding world. It must come from within, as the fruit from the blossom.

We have seen how pain contributes to the perfection of the animal. In itself it is not good. It affects the organism like intoxication; it slows down or checks certain secretions; it limits appetite and causes emaciation, it weakens the organism and lessens its power of resistance in the struggle for life. Spinoza had good reason for saying that suffering "diminishes" the being. It is not then that pain can *per se* procure any good for the animal. It is a cause *per accidens*, in that it awakes in it the desire to protect itself or to fly from the approaching evil. It is always the effort of the living being, the action that it uses on this occasion, that is the creator of Good. And that is also true where man is concerned. It is not that Evil could ever help him in his struggle towards the ideal, but the action that he is forced to use to protect himself from it does help him.

However, let us notice here a detail of great importance. For Evil, in the form of physical pain, to change into good for the animal, it has only to be perceived by the animal. The result is inevitable. The perception of the Evil gives birth in the animal to certain affections automatically, so to speak. They are shown by its movements. In this respect one might look upon the animal as a "psychic automaton"; it carries out promptly, faithfully, and completely, the suggestions received; it never resists them. It is, moreover, incapable of doing so because it is not free.

The situation of Man is very different. He is free. Thanks to his liberty, he can reply or not to the invitation that comes to him from Evil. For suffering to do a man good, it is not sufficient for it to be perceived, it must also be accepted. In other words, suffering must be ennobled by consent to the "sacrifice"; man must consent to submit to an evil because he has in view a good of a higher order.

Sacrifice is not, then, of a passive nature. It is an action, and one that justly shows the nobility of man, his dignity and his greatness. To understand this we need only compare the attitude of an animal with that of a man in the face of the same danger. The animal flees from it; it has not the strength to cope with it—it yields—it thinks itself beaten without having put up a fight. Man, on the contrary, looks Evil in the face, accepts the challenge; he fights it and overthrows it. Man is thus the victor. The victory increases his strength, exalts his whole being. He is thereafter in some way more than man; his faculties are widened, deepened, amplified.

Let us consider one of his faculties—his intelligence, for example. Naturally it finds complete satisfaction in the direct vision of Truth. For it is towards Truth that it always tends. But how poor and miserable it would be if it held as truth only that which it had itself experienced. It would then know only that which happened in the neighborhood, that to which his senses could bear testimony. Its province would be limited to the same place that man inhabited, to the time that he spent on earth. All that had gone before him, all that would happen after him, would remain wrapped in the clouds of ignorance and man would resemble the animal. His ignorance would be most humiliating, for he would never gain any idea of his own origin. He would not even know the place nor the date of his birth, for we have no direct immediate knowledge of these things. He would have neither par-

ents, nor country, nor genealogy, nor traditions, for how could he possess all that? By faith. Now faith is a sacrifice on the part of intelligence in renouncing any claim of admitting only that which fully satisfies the mind. Faith contents itself heroically with truth in the glimmer of twilight; with the simple testimony of a man or of God. Intelligence will never be satisfied with that; it will suffer. But this sacrifice on the part of intelligence will enrich man in his intelligence!

Let us pass on to the will of Man. That is free. Nature has not wished to determine it; the things that it meets on its way, the particular goods, are not strong enough to determine it. Only the Good in Itself can do that. But that good resides in the sphere of the ideal and man lives in the real world. Now the ideal is always the same, its action is immutable, and Man must act in a world that changes unceasingly and flows on like a torrent. Man must decide for himself according to circumstances.

Liberty is the instrument of man's greatness. It is liberty that gives him the noblest empire of all, empire over himself. A transcendent but terrible privilege! For liberty may easily degenerate into license and cause the waste of precious strength and the dispersal of treasures. To save himself from such disaster, man must use his liberty with prudence; to the physical liberty that gives him the power to do what he will he must add the moral liberty that gives him the power to do what is right. Physical liberty is a gift of Nature; moral liberty must be the work of man. How is he going to acquire it? By imposing on his physical activity certain regulating principles, by always directing it towards his ideal. We must add to our inborn character, the gift of Nature, another character that will be our own creation. That will be what we call our "virtues": acquired forces that man establishes by the power

of his will and which in a continuous and vigorous manner direct him towards Good and send him forward towards the ideal.

Now how can one acquire these virtues? They are only "good habits". And good habits are the result of repeated efforts, thanks to which the moral being wins the finest victory, the victory over himself. And this victory over self involves a struggle against self, a struggle always hard, always painful. Virtues are the fruit of sacrifice, the fruit of suffering.

We might without exaggeration say that all that there is of beauty and of greatness in the life of man is due to suffering and the result of sacrifice. For the farmer to be able to reap an abundant harvest he must in the autumn have sacrificed some of his grain; he must have thrown it into the ground and allowed it to die. It is the same law for Man. It is by fighting, by suffering, by sacrifice, that he builds character. Education would be an impossibility without a continual struggle against self, without suffering, without sacrifice. The pedagogic methods that claim to spare the child all effort produce very mediocre subjects. But Man has to continue the work of education all through his life; he must never cease the fight against self.

We said before that even the purely passive progress of the animal kingdom implies some pain, some suffering. But this automatic progress is no more than a shadow of true progress, of active progress. In reality, passive progress only gives what its surroundings have supplied to the animal. The fact could be interpreted by a kind of equation if it could ever be expressed in mathematical terms. All true progress creates a new reality, and such progress involves sustained effort, hard work, many sacrifices.

In the same way, every invention involves some sacrifice. We imagine sometimes that inventions spring ready made from the brain, like the helmeted Minerva from the head of Jupiter. Let us not forget that the goddess whom we call Minerva or Pallas Athena is only a myth! Even when inventions come into man's consciousness unexpectedly they are still the fruit of a long, secret work of incubation, a result of thought and efforts of attention that had as their object a single group of very special problems. They also required sacrifices.

It is by suffering, by the acceptance of Evil, by sacrifice, that man arrives at his full realization, that he approaches his ideal and draws nearer to perfection.

THE HIERARCHY OF EVIL, THE HIERARCHY OF BEING

1. The Hierarchy of Evil, the Hierarchy of Being: a curious coincidence in Nature, we have said. The nobler the being, the more vulnerable he is to Evil. This is not a matter of chance but a *law of Nature*.

Of all organized beings, it is the plant that suffers least, and it would be even more exact to say that it does not suffer at all because the evils that touch it cannot be expressed in psychic terms, they are not *felt*. But also, the profit it draws is, as we have seen, almost nothing.

The animal does feel pain, but this pain is very limited: it is limited in time and in space, like all that is material. Only the evil that is present is perceived. Only the sensations of touch are affected by it; and the consciousness of them is so reduced and vague that one might say it is only an impersonal evil.

It is in man that evil reaches its apogee, as we have already said. All the physical and spiritual faculties of the human being are liable to suffering. For him, it is not confined to the present moment; it takes in a more or less distant future. It even reaches into his past. It is particularly painful because of the consciousness that he has of it, the attention that he gives to it.

2. But on the other hand, what a *fruitful* part it is called upon to play in our lives! It is first of all the instrument,

thanks to which the Creator puts Man in possession of the faculty of creative action. Man comes from the hand of Nature full of ignorance, selfishness and bad instincts. Now he becomes wise, altruistic, sometimes virtuous, sometimes even a saint. How can such a transformation be accomplished? By work, by sacrifice; in short, thanks to Evil.

The Evil from which man suffers may be spread over his whole life, may infect his whole existence. But it helps him greatly to go straight on towards his own end. That end is not of this world, it is in eternity. If man's existence were to be finished with his last earthly sigh, the problem of Evil would be truly tragic and our existence on this planet would be absurd. To live only to suffer? For what purpose? Such an idea is repugnant to common sense. How could it fail to shock the good sense of Nature? Rather than exist just to suffer, as men know suffering, it would be better to remain plunged in nonentity or to return there as soon as possible. Such an outlook necessitates pessimism¹ which would then be a perfectly reasonable attitude. To encourage man to bear the weight of existence, the hope of personal immortality must not be denied him. This hope alone gives meaning to the life of suffering that we lead here below; a life which is a beginning and not a conclusion, a means and not an end. If we separate this world from the other—A. Eymieux has said—it becomes absolutely unintelligible. The child in his mother's womb, if he had the use of his reason, if he already had a way of knowing all about his little world but nothing more, ignorant of the fact that he must be born one day, this poor child would understand nothing of why he was there nor of the mysterious shocks that jostle him, of his lungs that lack air, of his eyes that lack light, of his limbs crumpled up and as yet of no use. He would think his life absurd and

¹ See Part. III, 10: *Pessimism*.

he would be right. It has no meaning apart from the end to which it should come. A life beyond the mother's womb, that is the only explanation of human life in this world.²

3. Not one of our sacrifices is lost. All is found again. There is in this matter a kind of law of conservation of *spiritual energy*. Spiritual energy, like material energy, preserves itself. The difference is only in kind; that which is lost in atonements and sacrifices is found again in merits and acquired virtues.

For such a conquest no sacrifice is too great; a man would be reasonable in offering for it all that he possessed, his very life. For in abandoning this life, he enters the other, the true, the great, the eternal life. The animal does not know how to detach itself from the present life, for its loss for an animal would be irreparable. What could it be given in exchange for its life? So it remains incapable of any renunciation, of any mortification, of any sacrifice. None of that has any meaning for it. So it flees from suffering as it flees from death—its supreme evil. The life of man seems to it worthless. It would be worthless for Man too, if he had not the prospect of eternal existence.

4. Man, as we have seen, is a *résumé* of the universe, a microcosm. He is simultaneously cosmic, vegetable, and animal. He belongs to three great families. His blood is of their sap. All these humble parents nourish him, clothe him, and allow him to exist and to develop himself. They help him in every way, sometimes even by causing him suffering and inflicting death upon him. In this sense, it is for *Man* that all beings are born. It is that man may at last raise "an august face towards the heavens", as Buffon said, that they have, during millions of years, crawled in the dust. Man, armed with intelligence, rises very high above them,

² A. Eymieux, *La Providence et la guerre* (Paris, 1917), pp. 31-32.

He is the *connecting link* between matter and *Eternal Spirit*.

That is how the inferior beings also are reunited with God; they reach *Him through Man*.

It is by this interpreter that the irrational being participates in eternity. It participates in the eternal life of man because of the ways in which it has served him. Moreover, all Nature will live again in the imperishable memory of the human being, in his knowledge and in his undying love.

Thus, in this vista of the eternal destiny of man, Nature appears as one great *family* in which all collaborate in a *single aim*. And we can understand the language of the mystics who called the plants "our sisters" and the animals "our brothers". How our sisters radiate graciousness and kindness in the services that they render us! How our brothers kindly help us! They make us suffer sometimes, but not from malice, from simple ignorance. They are little innocent brothers that we must know how to guide. And then, even when they make us suffer, they are only helping us on our way towards our eternal destiny, as we have seen before.

PART III
PESSIMISM OR OPTIMISM

PESSIMISM ¹

1. Optimism, thanks to the fame of Leibnitz and Malebranche who founded it, became universally known in the intellectual world soon after its birth, and thereafter it grew to be one of the most exciting problems in the history of thought. Philosophers, literary men, and scientists have all discussed it.

But this popularity of optimism has not been without its counterpart. In some circles it provoked very passionate reactions and furious polemics, thus indirectly preparing the way for diametrically opposite ideas which became known, from the time of Coleridge, as pessimism.

2. However, pessimism is not a modern invention. In fact it is found in remote antiquity. Indian philosophy is replete with a deep feeling of human wretchedness. It insists upon seeing in our existence only a simple effect of sin. For if we are to believe this philosophy, life is given to us to expiate the faults we committed in another life (the doctrine of pre-existence).²

Buddhistic philosophy is especially somber. For, denying the Creator and systemically abstracting from the Absolute Being, it deprives man of the only consolation that Brahman-

¹ We reproduce here, with slight changes, what we have published in *The New Scholasticism* (Vol. XXII, pp. 249-297; 417-439).

² We have treated this problem at length in our work *La réincarnation des esprits* (Rio de Janeiro, Desclée De Brouwer, Bibliothèque française de Philosophie, 1942), pp. 23-32.

ism had left to him—that of seeing himself one day absorbed into the universal spirit of Brahma, the true source of Being. In the verses known as the Bhartrihari, we read the following words:

Man's life is limited to one hundred years: night takes up half of these; one half of the remainder is absorbed by infancy and old age; the rest is passed in the midst of the sicknesses, separations, and adversities which accompany life, in serving others and giving oneself up to similar occupations. Where is one to find happiness in a life that is like the foam that the agitation of the waves produces in the sea?

Helen Keller was right in saying: "If I had been born in the midst of these fatalistic doctrines, I should still be in darkness, my life a desert land where no caravan of thought might pass between my spirit and the outside world".³ In fact her blindness and muteness would have been considered as a punishment which had to be expiated.

Greek thought, taken as a whole, betrays quite clearly an optimistic tendency. Nevertheless we find in it certain germs of pessimism. We must mention here, in particular, the doctrine of *fatum*, a blind force which in many cases crushes our best efforts and so diminishes the good that we can effect. As the gods are also subjected to this force, our situation becomes really despairing. This attitude of mind is clearly seen in certain poems and certain philosophic works.

Thus for example, Homer, speaking of man in his *Iliad*, says that he is the most unhappy of all beings, that his lot is to live a life of sighs.⁴ Theognis maintains that the greatest benefit of man would have been not to be born; and once he had the misfortune to be born, to die as soon as possible.⁵

³ Helen Keller, *Optimism* (New York, 1903), p. 65.

⁴ *Ilias* (Leipzig, 1900), xvii. 446-447, Part II, p. 112; xxiv. 525, p. 256.

⁵ *The Elegies of Theognis*, a revised text by T. Hudson-Williams (London, 1910), vv. 425-428, p. 126.

These words became famous in antiquity. They appear especially in Sophocles⁶ and Plutarch.⁷

Euripides sees nothing in man's life but labor.⁸ The Stoics, after having first proclaimed in pathetic words that our real happiness consists in virtue, implying a complete subjection to the order of nature and an absolute indifference to all the appeals of this world's goods, were quick to see that the realization of this happiness is beyond human strength, such as it is. Therefore their distressing conclusion: Let us be satisfied with a limited happiness which will consist less in the enjoyment of Good than in being free from Evil. This conclusion was clearly expressed at the beginning of the third century B.C. by Hegesias, a member of the famous sect of Cyrenaics. In his work entitled *The Desperate*, he considers happiness to be like a deceitful phantom and death our real liberator. Many people, influenced by these discouraging thoughts, committed suicide. This is why he was called *Peisithanatos*.⁹

The works of Pliny, the naturalist,¹⁰ of Seneca,¹¹ of Marcus Aurelius,¹² and of so many others are full of lamentations on the miseries and the nothingness of human life.

Thus, once more, pessimism is not a recent acquisition. It was already known in antiquity. But it lacked there the

⁶ *The Oedipus Coloneus* (3d ed., Cambridge, 1900), vv. 1125 ff., p. 178.

⁷ *Consolatio ad Apollonium* c. 47. According to him, the words quoted were spoken by a certain Silenus when caught by Midas. When asked what, in his opinion, would be best for man, he is supposed to have replied: "Never to be born. And the second best is to die as early as possible".

⁸ *Hippolytus* 189: "The whole life of man is full of grief, nor is there any rest from toil and moil".

⁹ This word means: "The one who induces to death".

¹⁰ C. Plinius Secundus *Natur. Histor.* vii. Praef. (ed. Carol Mayhoff, Leipzig, 1909), ii. 1-3.

¹¹ L. An. Seneca *Ad Marciam de consolatione*, c. 10, cc. 20-22 (ed. Emil Hermes, Leipzig, 1905); cf. *De ira*, ii. 8.

¹² Marcus Aurelius, i. 8; ii. 13; iv. 3; vi. 12, 41; ix. 17.

forms of a philosophical system. In this connection it savors strangely of the lyrical pessimism of Byron, Leopardi, Musset, Baudelaire, Leconte de Lisle, Heine, and many other modern writers; of a pessimism which, on the whole, is nothing but the pathetic confirmation of the evil of this world, a desperate cry of anguish of the tortured soul.

Before modern times pessimism was not systematized to constitute a philosophy.

3. Who was it who accomplished this task? One might first think of Hume. In fact, his pessimism¹³ is strictly connected with his philosophy, especially skeptical and radically phenomenalist. However, Hume did not give his pessimistic ideas the necessary development to build a real system of philosophy.

According to Ed. v. Hartmann, this was Kant's work.¹⁴ Here are the principal reasons on which Ed. v. Hartmann based his opinion. First, in his essay published in 1765,¹⁵ Kant is no longer a disciple of the Leibnitzian-Wolffian optimism, as he was in an essay published six years before.¹⁶ Moreover, he adopts Maupertuis' theory on the quantitative inferiority of human happiness compared with its misery, a theory which he had attacked in an essay published in 1763.¹⁷ Finally, in his *Critiques*, he teaches that happiness and ethics, or virtue, could not be reconciled in the world of phenomena. For this world is governed by forms of space, time, and

¹³ See his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, edited by N. K. Smith (Oxford, 1935), *passim*; *The Natural History of Religion, Essays* (London, 1875), II, 309-366.

¹⁴ Ed. v. Hartmann, *Zur Geschichte und Begründung des Pessimismus* (Berlin, 1880), pp. 1-64.

¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (Königsberg, 1788), pp. 6-8.

¹⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Versuch einer Betrachtung über den Optimismus* (Königsberg, 1759).

¹⁷ *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Grössen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen* (Königsberg, 1763).

causality, while ethics, being always and everywhere the same, is not subject to these three forms and consequently does not have to consider our own good, our happiness; it should be governed only by the categorical imperative.

What does this mean? We believe that the reasons cited above do not allow us to call Kant "the founder of philosophical pessimism", "the father of pessimism", as does Ed. v. Hartmann.¹⁸

To begin with, Ed. v. Hartmann's arguments are founded on some confusion. Indeed whoever does not profess the uncompromising optimism of Leibnitz or Wolff is not necessarily a pessimist. These two theories—optimism and pessimism—are not altogether contradictory; they are rather two "contraries" between which there is room for several intermediate theories. Consequently, refusing the one does not necessarily mean accepting the other. In the same way, one can perfectly well assert that in this world the sum of pains outnumbers the sum of pleasures without necessarily falling into pessimism. Plato, for whom terrestrial existence is essentially imperfect and the pleasures of this world sheer absence of pain, is not considered as a real pessimist. Why? Because he admitted the world of Ideas which we can reach by our own efforts, enlightened by Reason. In the same way, Christianity, which at all times preaches the "vanity" of terrestrial joys, is not really pessimistic. For it still speaks of heaven and of the eternal beatitude which is reserved for man. Now Kant, while disputing the agreement of happiness with virtue in the world of phenomena, affirms such an agreement expressly for the world of noumena in which the *a priori* forms of space, time, and causality do not exist.

¹⁸ Ed. v. Hartmann, *Zur Geschichte und Begründung des Pessimismus* (Berlin, 1880).

4. The real founder of philosophical pessimism is Arthur Schopenhauer. He starts from Kant's philosophy, of which he is an enthusiastic admirer.¹⁹ The objects of our experience, said Kant, are only "representations" of our mind, pure phenomena. Our intelligence does not reach the things in themselves, the noumena. This assertion contained a contradiction. For, what right has Kant to assert the existence of things in themselves, and even more to describe some of their attributes, if one cannot reach them immediately and if the principle of causality is considered by him as an *a priori* form?

In order to remove this contradiction, the critical mind has the choice of three ways. First of all, he may ignore the noumena: this several of Kant's disciples did, thus falling into pure subjectivism. Secondly, he may attribute to intelligence the power of going beyond relativity, the phenomenon, and reaching the absolute, the noumenon, as do the realistic philosophers with Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Leibnitz, etc. The third way would be the following: to discover in man another faculty able to grasp the absolute, while leaving to intelligence the sphere of relativity, of the phenomenon. Now Schopenhauer chose this last alternative. He contrived to save realism²⁰ by means of will power; the thinking individual, he declares in substance, does not stop at contemplating representations of phenomena. He is also the dynamic center whence will power—the source of any action—springs up. Consequently, will power must be con-

¹⁹ Arthur Schopenhauer, *Le monde comme volonté et comme représentation*, transl. by A. Burdeau (7th ed., Paris, Alcan), p. xvii: "Whoever has not assimilated Kant's doctrine is still in a kind of primitive innocence". *Ibid.*, III, 8: "No truth is more certain, more absolute, more evident than this: all that exists, exists for thought".

²⁰ This realism is greatly extenuated by the following remark: "The act of will power is no doubt only the nearest and most precise phenomenon of the thing in itself. . . . Therefore this is the meaning of my teaching, that will power is the inmost essence of everything, of what I call the thing in itself." *Ibid.*, chap. 18, p. 10.

sidered as the real cause of the phenomena.²¹ It plays the part that Kant attributes to "things in themselves" (*Dinge an sich*). In this way one may say: "it is will alone that is the thing in itself",²² "will [is] for us identified with the thing";²³ "we have not, like Kant, renounced absolutely the possibility of knowing the thing in itself, but, in our opinion, one must look for it in the will";²⁴ "the thing in itself is only will".²⁵

Therefore it is will which constitutes the fundamental reality of the Ego. "The entity of man is, in the last analysis, the will".²⁶ "The will as a thing in itself constitutes the inward, true, and indestructible essence of man",²⁷ his "substance".²⁸ All that is outside of my will is only its objectivation, so that we may say: "the world is my will".²⁹

This is true also of my body. "This is but my will which has become visible"³⁰ and "objective".³¹ Thus it is a "phenomenon of my will",³² but a "primary", "immediate" phenomenon.³³ Intelligence is a secondary, mediate phenome-

²¹ According to Kant, the phenomenon implies the forms *a priori*. Now these forms, actions of the subject, are the result of will power. *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au III^e Livre*.

²² *Op. cit.*, chap. 19, p. 13.

²³ *Op. cit.*, *Livre III: Le monde come représentation*, p. 182.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, *Supplément au Livre IV*, chap. 41, p. 305.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, *Deuxième Livre: Le monde considéré comme volonté*, p. 114.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, *Livre Troisième: Le monde comme représentation*, p. 302.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, "Will . . . is our most inward essence", chap. 19, p. 13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, p. 13.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 4.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, II: *Le monde considéré comme volonté*, p. 111.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, chap. 19, p. 13.

³² *Ibid.*, chap. 19, p. 13.

³³ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, p. 13; chap. 22, p. 91. "Will becomes most immediately objective in blood" (*ibid.*, III, chap. 20, p. 69), which primitively also creates the organism, achieves it by growth, then nourishes it continuously", *ibid.*, III, chap. 20, p. 69. "Considered objectively, the will to walk is the foot, as the will to touch is the hand; the will to digest, the stomach", *ibid.*, III, chap. 20, p. 73.

non, for "it is a function of the body",³⁴ "a function of the brain".³⁵ And the best proof of this is "experience". In fact, "everyone has been able to convince oneself by experience that his knowledge depends absolutely on his brain";³⁶ it depends on the brain as digestion depends on the stomach.³⁷ The same thing is true of consciousness; far from being the "cause" of organic life, it is the simple "result" of it.³⁸ The theories which consider consciousness as the "essence" of man are unacceptable.³⁹ Intelligence is only an accident in man.⁴⁰

What I have said, remarks Schopenhauer, regarding my own body, is true also of the Ego of my fellow creatures, moreover of all existing things: animals, plants, minerals. "The will to live . . . is the substance and nucleus of all reality";⁴¹ "the essence in itself of any being consists in its will".⁴² All bodies which surround us, whatever their nature may be, are the objectivation of their respective wills. Moreover, Schopenhauer writes, "I consider any force in nature as a will".⁴³

As will is, by reason of its very nature, deprived of all knowledge,⁴⁴ it consequently is also deprived of any consciousness.⁴⁵ It is a blind urge, a dynamic force⁴⁶ in the guise of wishing. This wishing is present in everything. For

³⁴ *Ibid.*, III, chap. 19, p. 26.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, III, chap. 19, p. 28.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, III, chap. 18, p. 12.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, III, chap. 18, p. 12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, chap. 41, p. 280.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, chap. 18, p. 12; chap. 19, p. 13.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, p. 13.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 28, p. 164.

⁴² *Ibid.*, chap. 22, p. 91; chap. 26, p. 142; III, *Le monde comme représentation*, p. 323.

⁴³ *Op. cit.*, II, *Le monde considéré comme volonté*, p. 116.

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, chap. 23, p. 106.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 18, p. 12.

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, II, p. 119: "Will can act without any kind of knowledge". Cf. also, p. 118.

everything manifests tendencies.⁴⁷ Now, there is no tendency without a wish.

This wishing is not governed by any law.⁴⁸ For law is based on reason. And will precedes reason.

Since it is irrational, the will is unable to make a choice.⁴⁹ It is a kind of diffuse potentiality ready to take any direction. Only in this way can it be called "free".⁵⁰ As it is not guided in its actions by a previous knowledge of the end⁵¹ and always pushes ahead blindly,⁵² for individuals it is the cause of much suffering. For what is suffering? It is a stoppage of the will caused by some obstacle between itself and its present aim.⁵³ Now how could will avoid such stoppages since it acts at random? And the individuals pay the price. In fact, the will "has but one aim: the preservation of all species",⁵⁴ of all "permanent forms",⁵⁵ of "all its Platonic ideas".⁵⁶ On the contrary, the individual has "only for it an indirect value, the value of the simple means of preserving the species; this excepted, the will is indifferent as to the individual's existence, and even leads it to its ruin as soon as it is no longer able to serve its aim".⁵⁷

⁴⁷ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, chap. 20, p. 66: "Will is immediately present in all muscular fibers of the body in the aspect of irritability, as a permanent tendency toward action."

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 25, p. 133.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 25, pp. 132, 133.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 299: "Will in itself is the only purely free reality, which decides by itself; for it, there is no law".

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, *Le monde considéré comme volonté*, p. 169: "The absence of any design and any limit is, in fact, essential to the will in itself, which is an endless effort".

⁵² *Ibid.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, chap. 29, pp. 163, 165, 166.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, III: *Le monde comme représentation*, p. 323.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, chap. 28, p. 164; chap. 41, pp. 295-296.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 28, p. 165.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 28, p. 165.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 28, pp. 164, 165, 170-171; chap. 41, pp. 284, 298. "The idea of the species is the very root, the place of appearance of the will to live; it is also the only element, the duration of which is really important to will. Lions, for instance, are born and die . . . but *leonitas*, the idea or the form, remains", *ibid.*, chap. 41, p. 294.

But whence comes, in the blind will, this preference for species? "To this question there is only one answer: in this way does the will objectify itself".⁵⁸

All individuals suffer. But their sufferings are not equal. The lowest animals (infusoria and radiaries) experience slight pain, the beginning of suffering.⁵⁹ The superior animals suffer more; but man suffers most.⁶⁰

The fear of death, a "senseless",⁶¹ "irrational"⁶² fear, but for man "more dreadful than all suffering",⁶³ is only "the counterpart of the will to live".⁶⁴ In fact, it is independent of any knowledge, for the animal itself experiences it too, although devoid of any idea of death.⁶⁵ On the other hand, if it were produced "by the idea of non-being, we ought to feel the same fright at the thought of the time when we did not yet exist".⁶⁶ Is it not due, perhaps, to the fact that "we found life preferable to all goods"?⁶⁷ No, for experience could rather have awakened in us an infinite aspiration toward the lost paradise of non-being".⁶⁸ "Go, knock at the gates of the tombs and ask the dead to come back to life; they will shake their heads with a gesture of refusal";⁶⁹ "it appears very doubtful that a single man, thinking and sincere, could be found, who, at the end of his life, would rather begin all over again and not greatly prefer absolute nothingness".⁷⁰

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 28, p. 168.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, *Livre III: Le monde comme volonté*, p. 324.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, chap. 41, p. 275.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, chap. 26, p. 448.

⁶⁴ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, chap. 41, p. 275, cf. also p. 278.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 41, p. 275.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, *Livre III: Le monde comme volonté*, p. 339.

Voltaire, that favorite of fortune and nature, said: "Happiness is but a dream; suffering is a reality". And further: "I have been experiencing it for eighty years. I do not know of anything to do except resign myself to it, and remember that flies are born to be eaten up by spiders, and men to be eaten up by grief".⁷¹ "The happiest moment of a happy man is still the one when he goes to sleep".⁷²

To the tangible sophisms used by Leibnitz to demonstrate that this world is the best possible world, one can oppose the serious and firmly established proof that it is the worst. . . . If it were only a little worse, it could not exist any more.⁷³ A slight alteration of atmosphere produces epidemics which carry away millions of men; any hardly greater alteration would be enough to wipe out all life.⁷⁴

Since our condition is rather a state that had better be non-existent,⁷⁵ all that is around us is branded with this characteristic; just as in hell, everything is impregnated with the smell of sulfur. Any object is always imperfect and deceitful, every enjoyment always reduced to a half enjoyment; every pleasure mixed with displeasure; any satisfaction carries in itself a principle of trouble; any relief, a source of new fatigues. . . . We resemble Phineas, all of whose food the Harpies polluted and made uneatable. . . . The truth is as follows: we must be miserable and we are. And the main source of the most serious evils which assail man, is man himself: *homo homini lupus*. To anyone who encompasses with one glance this truth, life seems a hell, worse than Dante's, inasmuch as in it each one must be the demon of each

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, chap. 46, p. 387.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 390.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

other. . . .”⁷⁶ “Life bears such a clear stamp of a character meant to inspire disgust that it is hard to conceive how one could have mistaken it and let one’s self be convinced . . . that man is here to be happy”.⁷⁷ Any enjoyment, any pleasure, is purely negative; only pain and want are positive. “All the happiness we derive from goods is to keep away certain sufferings. We must lose them to value them; want, deprivation, pain: these are positive”.⁷⁸ “Therefore we do not appreciate the three greatest goods of life: health, youth, and freedom, as long as we possess them; in order to learn their value, we must have lost them”.⁷⁹ “Suffering is the very essence of life”.⁸⁰

“The end of life is not happiness”,⁸¹ but rather “work, deprivation, misery, and suffering”,⁸² “all of this crowned by death”.⁸³ “The whole of human existence tells us clearly enough that suffering is the true destination of life”.⁸⁴ “No doubt everyone hopes for eternal beatitude”; however, this is impossible. Nature cannot lead us anywhere except always and everywhere to her bosom.⁸⁵ “Existence can never be considered but as an aberration from which redemption means coming back”.⁸⁶ Correcting this mistake and thus denying all previous aspirations, this is what religions call self-denial, *abnegatio sui ipsius*; for the true Ego is the will

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, chap. 46, p. 389.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 46, p. 385.

⁷⁸ *Livre III: Le monde comme volonté*, p. 334. Cf. also *ibid.*, chap. 46, p. 386.

⁷⁹ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, p. 386.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, *Livre III*, p. 332.

⁸¹ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, chap. 49, p. 447: “The object of our existence is not happiness”, *ibid.*, chap. 49, p. 446.

⁸² Cf. also *ibid.*, chap. 49, p. 447.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, chap. 46, p. 396.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 49, p. 447.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 48, p. 417.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 48, p. 417.

to live,⁸⁷ as also taught by "the true and primitive Christianity".⁸⁸

It is "negation of the wish to live", Schopenhauer insists further, which is "redemption", our "true salvation".⁸⁹ For the negation of the will to live will have for a necessary consequence the abolition and annihilation of the world which is the reflection of the will.⁹⁰ "From then on nothing will subsist ahead of us but nothingness".⁹¹

One reaches this negation of the will through mortification of the will power implied in the practice of asceticism, celibacy, and moral virtues: justice and charity.⁹² Suicide does not lead to this goal. In fact, the negation of the will consists not in the horror of the evils of life but in the abhorrence of its enjoyments. Now the one who commits suicide would like to live; he is only dissatisfied with the conditions of his life. Therefore, in destroying his body, he does not renounce the will to live, but simply life itself. He would want the life he renounces. He would wish that his will might exist and assert itself without hindrances.⁹³ Suicide denies the individual, not the species. Life is infallibly and forever inherent to the will of living, and suffering to life; it follows that suicide "is a futile and senseless action: one may well destroy volun-

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 48, pp. 417-418.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 48, pp. 417, 421, 427, 428. Cf. also *Livre III: Le monde comme volonté*, chap. 68, p. 416. "Protestantism, by the exclusion of asceticism and what is the center of it, the deserving angle of celibacy, really renounced the inmost substance of Christianity and can only be considered as a detached branch from this trunk". *Ibid.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, chap. 48, p. 436. "It may be a good religion for ministers, well off, married, and intelligent; but it is not Christianity", *ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 48, pp. 420, 422.

⁹⁰ *Op. cit.*, *Livre III: Le monde comme volonté*, p. 429.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 430.

⁹² *Ibid.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*: chap. 48, pp. 417-418; 428, 436, 437.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 416. Schopenhauer adds here, to comfort us, "that this nothingness is not absolute but relative". Cf. *op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, chap. 48, p. 424.

tarily the particular phenomenon; the thing in itself remains intact; it is like the rainbow which remains intact in spite of the continuous succession of the drops which for a while support it".⁹⁴

5. The pessimistic philosophy of Schopenhauer was not favorably received. It was generally considered as a pathological fancy. Only near the end of his life did Schopenhauer succeed in interesting the world in his ideas.⁹⁵ The popularity of pessimism is due to Ed. von Hartmann. He was often called "Schopenhauer's disciple",⁹⁶ not a badly applied name. However, there is reason to add that he was a rather independent disciple. For while taking many of his ideas from Schopenhauer, he tried to give them a personal development. To that end he grafted on Schopenhauer's irrational and arbitrary will, Hegel's Absolute Idea. But he replaced the dialectical method of the latter⁹⁷ by an "inductive-scientific method".⁹⁸

Organic bodies in general, and those especially of animals, he declares, give us proofs of a remarkable finality.⁹⁹ This is evident in all their vital operations: nutrition, growth, natural cures, instinct, reflexes.¹⁰⁰ In order to explain these facts of finality, one must admit a special reality diffused in Nature. It may be called the Unconscious,¹⁰¹ for the vital operations mentioned above show no sign of consciousness.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

⁹⁵ This was the result of the publication of his popular work, *Parerga und Paralipomena* (Berlin, 1851).

⁹⁶ Ed. von Hartmann says so himself, not without a certain bitterness, *Zur Geschichte und Begründung des Pessimismus*, *op. cit.*, p. v.

⁹⁷ See *Philosophie des Unbewussten* (Leipzig, 1904), I, 5 ff. *Über die dialektische Methode* (Berlin, 1868).

⁹⁸ *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, *op. cit.*, I, II.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, I, *passim*.

¹⁰¹ For the different meanings of the word "Unconscious" see *ibid.*, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 3-4.

The consideration of mental life in its different manifestations—intellections, tendencies, moral and esthetic feelings, artistic, mystic, and historical creations—which we find in man, furnish Hartmann with a still more remarkable proof of the existence of the Unconscious. In fact, all these actions imply the active and very important part of a psychic cause which, however, completely escapes our consciousness. Contrary to what happens to our conscious life, the Unconscious is not subject to fatigue, nor to illness, nor doubt.¹⁰² It does not ponder before acting, and yet it never errs in its actions.¹⁰³

According to Hartmann, this Unconscious constitutes what is deepest and really “substantial” in Nature.¹⁰⁴ It includes not only the will, but representation; for one never can want anything without having a representation of it, nor have a representation without wanting it.¹⁰⁵ Separation (“emancipation”) of intelligence from the will is possible only in the sphere of the Conscious; for then, one may think of something without wanting it.¹⁰⁶

The Conscious is a derivative of the Unconscious.¹⁰⁷ Not that the Unconscious contains formally the Conscious, but because, in the Unconscious, are found all the “necessary and sufficient conditions” so that the Conscious may appear under certain circumstances.¹⁰⁸ Here is how one ought to understand things. When the will encounters, in the pursuit of its ends, an opposition (*Widerstand*), it produces spontaneously not only the objective phenomenon of exist-

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-5, 138-144.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 164 ff.; pp. 175-201. Cf. also pp. 31-32.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 10, 33.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

ence but also the "subjective phenomenon of consciousness".¹⁰⁹

The mentioned opposition, Hartmann says, cannot come to the will but from its equal, that is to say, from another will with which it has a certain sphere of activity in common.¹¹⁰ Thus opposition fatally breaks out in the world. In fact, in order to be able to preserve himself in life, each individual must be endowed with a special instinct called "selfishness"; "without selfishness, no individual".¹¹¹ Now selfishness necessarily brings about the infringing on other people's rights.¹¹²

When denied by our will, the mentioned opposition affects our mind as a disagreeable impression, like a pain.¹¹³ This is something positive, as positive as pleasure. In fact, pleasure and pain are applied to the will of which they respectively are the satisfaction or annoyances. Schopenhauer asserts that pain alone is a positive reality; for him, pleasure would be only the ceasing or diminishing of pain: thus it would be something purely negative.¹¹⁴ This assertion which also seems to find a confirmation in certain facts of experience¹¹⁵, is however, unacceptable. There are pleasures which are not necessarily preceded nor followed by pain; such are, for instance, the pleasures derived from science and art.¹¹⁶

Schopenhauer also taught that this world is the worst of all possible worlds. This is a sophism, retorted Hartmann.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 279-280.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, II, 38.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 295.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-298.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

One can with good reason only admit that "the existence of this world is worse than its non-existence".¹¹⁸ This is because the total sum of pain surpasses by far that of pleasure.¹¹⁹ In order to demonstrate this assertion, Hartmann examines, one after the other, "the three periods of illusion" which humanity presumably has gone through. In the first period, of which Mosaism and Greek-Roman paganism are the best illustration, man believed that he could reach happiness in this world. But this was a cruel illusion.¹²⁰ In fact, all that is considered as constituting terrestrial happiness causes infinitely more suffering than pleasure!¹²¹ And this is so, not only "for the whole of humanity" but also "for every individual, even the one who lives in the most favorable conditions".¹²² In reality, health, youth, sexual love, affection, glory, science, art—all of this brings man more trouble than pleasure.¹²³ According to Hartmann, sexual love is especially deceitful. In order to be freed once forever of its illusions, one should not shrink from castration if this means could really bring about the abolition of the mentioned desire.¹²⁴

The second period, if Hartmann is to be believed, was inaugurated by Christianity. Observing the emptiness of the pleasures of this world, it conceived the idea of the goal of our life being in the next world. In order to reach it, the true believer must live at all times a life of sacrifice.¹²⁵ This hope, says Hartmann, is another illusion. For the conscious individual is only a phenomenon which disappears with death. What remains eternally is the "essence", "the unconscious",

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 295, 389.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 295-355.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 296-297.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 352.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 305-350.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

of which all individuals, whoever they may be, are only a manifestation.¹²⁶

In the third period one places the happiness to be reached in the future, at the end of a long cosmic evolution. The illusion of this theory appears clearly enough from the criticism of the first period, declares Hartmann. For what we have said about the evil inherent in human life applies not only to the present time but also to the future.¹²⁷ Humanity will progress in vain, it will never be able not only to suppress but also to diminish the greatest evils from which it suffers: sickness, old age, dependency on the will and power of others, misery, and discontent. Even though one could find as many remedies as desired for sicknesses, the number of these, especially of the chronic, agonizing ones, will always increase more rapidly than medical science. The joyful youth will always be only a particle of humanity, while the rest will be subjected to gloomy old age.¹²⁸ "The multiplying of men, more rapid than the means of nourishment, will cause them more and more to endure hunger, will bring about more and more deaths".¹²⁹ "The phantom of misery becomes more and more threatening".¹³⁰

"The number of immoral actions is increasing all the while".¹³¹ And certainly the moral level of humanity will not be, in a remote future, higher than the level of our time. This is demonstrated by the reasoning of analogy. In fact, from the first foundation of a primitive society up to our days, immorality has not diminished. It only changes.¹³² Artistic pleasures are shrinking in number; for art, more and more

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 376; 309-311; I, 341.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 379. Cf. also p. 377.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 377-378.

without an ideal, shows clearly a tendency toward a superficial dilettantism.¹³³ As to scientific progress, it contributes little, if anything, to the world's happiness from a theoretical point of view. From the practical one, this progress benefits politics, social life, ethics, and technique,¹³⁴ but the latter above all.¹³⁵ The same thing must be said of "factories, steamers, railways, and telegraphs".¹³⁶ They have done nothing positive for human happiness.¹³⁷ Inventions only do away with certain inconveniences; this is why they are appreciated only when first applied. In time one becomes unconscious of their advantages. Moreover they become indirectly a source of discontent by increasing our wishes and needs.¹³⁸ The same holds good, too, for medical and hygienic progress.¹³⁹ Primitive people are happier than the civilized ones. In the same way, the poor, inferior, and common classes are happier than the rich, noble, and educated ones; idiots are happier than intelligent people, and in general a being is all the happier as his nervous system is more insensible; for under these conditions the surplus of pain in proportion to pleasure is all the smaller and the persistence in the illusion all the greater. But with the progressive development of humanity coincides not only an increase of wealth and of needs but also of the sensitiveness of the nervous system and the culture of the mind. Consequently there is also a surplus of the pain felt in proportion to the pleasure and the shattering of illusion, that is to say the consciousness of the misery of life, of the futility of most pleasures, and the feeling of distress.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 380-381.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 385-386.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

As suffering only increases with the evolution of organization from the primitive cell to the creation of man, so it will always increase with the progressing evolution of the human mind. Rousseau advised the return of the primitive age. Utopia! For a mature man there is no hope of ever becoming a child! Humanity must always go on, even in spite of itself, toward a darker and darker future.¹⁴¹ What it will find possible to aspire to, at the end of its evolution, will be, at the most, release from suffering (*Schmerzlosigkeit*). A purely negative ideal! But will even this poor ideal ever be attainable? Humanity will have to "work in order to live, in spite of all, however, without even knowing why it is living".¹⁴² It will have left behind the illusions of life, but it will not expect or hope for anything from life.¹⁴³ Like a very old and very intelligent man, it will then have only one wish "calm, peace, eternal sleep without dreams . . . nothingness, the Nirvana".¹⁴⁴

When he reaches the last period of man's evolution, Hartmann asks himself the following question: why, in the last analysis, has the Unconscious created men? It is not to make them really happy, as we just saw.¹⁴⁵ Neither is it to find freedom in them,¹⁴⁶ as some suppose. For being alone existent from all eternity, it was not subjected to any coercion; so it was supremely free.¹⁴⁷ It is not finally to enjoy consciousness. For it is precisely consciousness that carries to the highest possible degree the misery of the world. The real aim of the creation of man is to allow the will to get rid of its unfortunate wishing. In fact, as the will is blind, it cannot free

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 389.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

itself, by itself, of its own misery.¹⁴⁸ It needs the enlightenment of consciousness which, having penetrated to the bottom the inanity of any existence, would make the created being renounce once and for all any willing.¹⁴⁹ This way, evil is finally conquered.¹⁵⁰ This way does the "salvation" of the world come about.¹⁵¹

No need of suicide to hasten the hour of release. For this action, while doing away with the individual, does not alter the general course of the cosmic processes which should be cured.¹⁵² It is not necessary, either, to devote one's self to the asceticism preached by Schopenhauer, to the mortification of the individual will to live. These means are as useless as suicide. In fact, once humanity would be wiped out, the poor universe would continue to exist, and the unconscious would find itself exactly at the same point as immediately before the creation of the first man. And it would not be long in taking advantage of the first opportunity to create a new man or another similar type.¹⁵³ Not only are the remedies suggested by Schopenhauer useless, they are also stupid and even more stupid than suicide. For they pretend to get the same result by a way considerably longer and harder.¹⁵⁴

So then, it is not by its own simple disappearance that humanity will fulfill its destiny but "by a complete surrender of individuality to the cosmic process so that this process can reach its aim, which is the freeing of the world".¹⁵⁵ "It is only by a complete submission to life and its suffering, and not by a cowardly renunciation and surrender that one will be able

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 393.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 396-397.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 402-403.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 399.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 399.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 399.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

to contribute something to the cosmic process".¹⁵⁶ And Ed. v. Hartmann, at the end of his meditations, congratulates himself on having made a happy marriage between pessimism and optimism.

6. Let us make a few critical remarks on the pessimistic system we have just roughly outlined.

When it is a question of appreciating certain ideas at their real value, it is advisable to know their genesis: the whole of the factors to which they owe their origin. Some of these factors have already been studied in the preceding pages. Thus, for instance, we have pointed out how Schopenhauer's metaphysical pessimism is connected with Kant's philosophy; Hartmann's with Hegel's and Schopenhauer's system. In the same way we have tried to demonstrate many interdependent relations between the pessimism of these two authors and the whole of their metaphysical and epistemological theories. But these are "logical" or, if one prefers, "objective" factors. It is advisable to see also in what measure the "psychic" or "subjective" factors may have influenced their gloomy theories as, for instance, the events of the pessimists' lives, the atmosphere in which they lived, their temperament.

There is all the more reason to ask this question, seeing that the "lyrical pessimism", with which the metaphysical has a great deal of affinity, may be almost completely explained by psychological factors. Leopardi's pessimism, for instance, is, so to speak, a sheer cry of the soul rebelling against the natural defects of his body. About the same is true of Byron, who was very conscious of the grave deformities of his body. They both died young.

Now is not, perhaps, "metaphysical pessimism" to a certain point only a philosophical systematization of practical

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

pessimism? The answer to this question does not seem too difficult, at least in the case of the founder of pessimism. In fact, the deep roots of Schopenhauer's pessimism lie in psychological factors. Let us show this briefly.

First of all, it is an unquestionable fact that Schopenhauer's family did not enjoy good health. An unfortunate heredity weighed on it. His grandmother had given birth to an imbecile son.¹⁵⁷ She herself became an idiot in her old age. His father had a strange character; he often, and without any reason, had terrible fits of anger. The cares of his business took such a form that his associates considered him insane. And his death, due to a fall in a canal, was generally called a suicide.¹⁵⁸

Arthur Schopenhauer, from his early childhood on, was inclined to solitude, to dreaming and misanthropy. He was haughty, selfish, irritable, unsociable. The success of others, or even their contentment, caused him jealousy. Unaccountable suspicions often tormented him. "You are unbearable and burdensome and very hard to live with . . . you cannot restrain your propensity to pick holes in other people", his mother told him. That is why, after he was expelled from the college of Gotha for an insult to one of his professors, and when he arrived at his mother's house in Weimar, she was not eager to admit him under her roof. His gloomy views on life, his malevolent and imprudent opinions about people and events, his continual complaints about things that were inevitable—all this depressed her and poisoned her life, she informed him. It was only during his absence that

¹⁵⁷ Her second son who died in 1795 seems not to have enjoyed solid mental health either. His mad and absurd prodigality makes this sufficiently evident.

¹⁵⁸ Arthur Schopenhauer's sister also had a very strange character. She led a solitary life and suffered frightfully from the lack of affection surrounding her. At times she was a prey to the idea that death would be the best solution to her painful existence.

she could "breathe freely"; in order to avoid painful disputes, she felt herself obliged during a certain period to communicate to him by writing whatever she had to say to him; they did not speak to each other. Every attempt she made to reunite with him ended disastrously; sooner or later they had to separate. From 1814 on they were permanently separated. He never saw her again until her death, which took place twenty-four years after the final separation.¹⁵⁹

But his mother was not the only one who could not get along with him. His only sister also broke off all correspondence with him for eleven years. She did so following the receipt of an outrageous letter that he wrote her in 1819. The friendship that bound Schopenhauer to Goethe through the intermediary of his mother did not last long either. "Dr. Schopenhauer", Goethe writes in his remembrances, "stepped to my side as a friend and well-wisher, yet at last a certain division became inevitable, as when two friends who have hitherto gone together say good-by—the one however wanting to go north, the other south, so that they very quickly lose sight of each other". A friend of his mother was treated so rudely and violently by Schopenhauer that on one occasion they came to blows.

The experience of Schopenhauer with a Berlin dress-maker is even more significant. She accused him in court of having kicked her, beaten her, and rendered her permanently incapable of working. The court decided in her favor. Schopenhauer was ordered to support her for the rest of her life.¹⁶⁰ These trivial incidents cast an interesting light upon Schopenhauer. But let us continue our study of his character.

¹⁵⁹ It was only six years before his mother's death that he renewed correspondence with her.

¹⁶⁰ On her death certificate (she died 20 years after the trial in question) Schopenhauer wrote: *Obit anus, abit onus*.

In 1820, Schopenhauer, in the position of a Privat-Dozent, announced his course on "the essence of the world and of spirit" at the University of Berlin. He did not doubt for an instant that he would with one blow outshine Hegel whose renown was a constant torture to Schopenhauer. That he might do so with brilliance, he decided to choose for his course the same hour as that of Hegel's course. His disappointment may be imagined when he arrived at his first class only to find the room practically empty. His position was such that he had to suspend his course entirely. But with his usual tendency towards unfounded suspicions he attributed his failure to Hegel's machinations and conceived an implacable hatred of him. He never spoke of him without heaping ridicule and insults upon him. He treated him always as a "dull and stupid pedant".

Schelling and Fichte, especially the latter, were no better treated than Hegel. For they too were in the "conspiracy" to bury Schopenhauer in silence! Whoever in a philosophic work dared to criticize his ideas, or whoever failed to underscore with sufficient emphasis Schopenhauer's merits, was certain of being treated as an enemy.¹⁶¹ Any praise given to a contemporary philosopher actually tortured him. He did his best to tarnish that praise. If anyone praised the *Medical Psychology* of Lotze, in his presence, Schopenhauer would add bitterly that it was a "worthless compilation" done by "Lotze and Boltz". The comparison that Frauenstadt made one day between Schopenhauer and Helmholtz irritated him immensely. To compare him with Helmholtz, he said, was like comparing Mont Blanc with a dike in a harbor.

The less he received acclaim from outside, the more he in-

¹⁶¹ Thus it was that in 1821 he wrote the most insulting article conceivable against F. E. Beneke, who, while giving a faithful report of Schopenhauer's thought, had dared to diverge from his exact words.

dulged in interior musing on his own greatness. He sincerely believed himself the *primus philosophus*, destined to occupy the throne that Kant had held until then. The criticism of Kant that he set forth in his inaugural dissertation ¹⁶² was intended precisely for this end; it would dethrone Kant once and for all and so prepare the ground for Schopenhauer's elevation. Extraordinarily sensitive to praise, he accepted, with an uncommon credulity, every idea that flattered his self-esteem.¹⁶³ In his exalted imaginings he anticipated the honors that posterity would one day confer upon him.

To get a complete picture of Schopenhauer, we should add a few words on the baseless fears to which he was subject. During the night if the slightest noise occurred, he would leap from his bed and seize his pistols. He always lived in a room on the first floor so as to be able to escape in case of fire. The cholera which had broken out in Germany in 1831 caused him a real panic and made him flee to Frankfurt. He made himself a leather glass in order to use it in hotels and thus avoid the danger of contagion. Schopenhauer also suffered from abnormal cutaneous sensations. Thus, for example, he himself tells us that he often felt as though he had just plunged into cold water.

The biographers of Schopenhauer tell us that in him are two different men: the one noble, the other trivial and mean. The remark is just. There is something peculiarly contradictory about Schopenhauer. At times he is exalted beyond measure, at times profoundly depressed.¹⁶⁴ Although he thoroughly despised men, yet he was in the highest degree sensitive to what they thought and said of him; their criti-

¹⁶² *Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde* (Rudolstadt, 1813).

¹⁶³ It is thus that he came to make a fool of himself concerning the position he hoped to obtain at the University of Zurich.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. also *op. cit.*, *Livre III: Le monde comme représentation*, 57, p. 331.

cisms disgusted him, their praise was his happiness. While professing absolute renunciation of the "will to live", the most excessive asceticism, the most integral celibacy, he did not avoid the pleasures he was condemning. Decidedly, his character was lacking in balance.

What we have just said of Schopenhauer's character authorizes us to draw the following conclusion. The founder of pessimism was not, psychologically speaking, completely normal. He suffered from chronic nervousness with paranoid tendencies. If these tendencies did not lead him into a hospital, it was due to the highly hygienic routine he always maintained. He avoided with great care any excess, any strain; his hours of sleep were very regular, and they were long; every day he took a two-hour walk, accompanied by his favorite dog; to distract his mind, he often took long pleasure trips, he frequented the theater and the opera assiduously. In a word, he did instinctively exactly what we advise for those who suffer from similar illness. He must really be congratulated on the fidelity with which he observed his routine.

Some authors seem to look for an explanation of Schopenhauer's pessimism principally in the external events of his life. We cannot follow them in this opinion.

Certainly the circumstances of his life were not conducive to gaiety. He wanted to become a great professor at the university; he failed. He wanted the world to recognize him as the *primus philosophus*; for a long time almost no one even opened his books. To this we must add his financial insecurity, the threats of international complications, the cholera epidemic, his long and wearying legal suit with the dress-maker mentioned above, his "mercury treatment", which was prologued and intense,¹⁶⁵ and so forth.

¹⁶⁵ Dr. Ivan Bloch supposes, with good reason, that Schopenhauer had contracted syphilis. See *Medizinische Klinik*, XXV-XXVI (1906).

Yet all these circumstances do not explain the origin of Schopenhauer's pessimism. For they were posterior to the publication of his principal work on pessimism and therefore obviously posterior to the elaboration of his system. We need not insist further on this point after what we have said above.

As to the events previous to this date, there is on the whole, little to note. At the age of five he accompanied his parents in their voluntary exile from their native city, Gdansk (Danzig), when the Prussian army was on the point of depriving it of independence at the time of the infamous division of Poland in 1793. At seventeen he entered a commercial school in Hamburg at the time when he felt a strong attraction to the career of science. He remained there for two years. But it is evident that neither of these events would have any effect upon him if within him there had not been a treacherous tendency. This tendency was his morbid character. It is this character which, in the last analysis, is responsible for his pessimism.

A. Austregésilo asserts that pessimism "constitutes a psychic error of morbid origin".¹⁶⁶ This verdict is certainly true when applied to Schopenhauer. This is why several doctors considered him a mental case.

One might ask: Are all pessimists then to be considered insane people? No. One may be a pessimist by whim or imitation. Moreover, one may profess pessimism in theory, while practicing optimism in life. This was just about the case of Ed. v. Hartmann.

For correctness' sake, let us add that the publication of Ed. v. Hartmann's pessimistic theory followed great sufferings.

¹⁶⁶ A. Austregésilo, *O Mal da Vida, Ensaio de psicoterapia filosofica* (Rio de Janeiro, 1920), p. 113. Cf. also p. 115: "No sane, intelligent man could ever either approve or accept a Schopenhauer moral".

The son of an army officer, his dream was to follow his father's career. In fact, in 1858, he was at the Cadets' School of Artillery. But he soon had to interrupt his favorite studies owing to a dreadful knee ailment, demanding a long and expensive treatment. In 1862 he renounced, to his great regret, the military career. Two years later he was engrossed in composing his pessimistic theory of the world (*Philosophy of the Unconscious*). Let us add to all this the whimsical, unruly character that he showed at school, and we shall easily understand to what degree the real misfortune to which he was a victim would exasperate him.

7. However, the unhealthy origin of metaphysical pessimism does not exempt us from studying it scrupulously.¹⁶⁷ This is all the more so, since insanity is not incompatible with genius.¹⁶⁸

We mentioned before that Schopenhauer had an extraordinary fear of death. It is now time to add that this idea of death inspires all his philosophy. We are of the opinion that there is a confirmation of this remark in the following paragraph: "Death is properly the inspiring genius or the *musa-gete* of philosophy, and Socrates defined philosophy as *θανάτου μελέτη*. Without death it would even be difficult to philosophize".¹⁶⁹ Thus it was above all to solve the problem of death that Schopenhauer applied himself to philosophy.

In the preceding pages we have already encountered this solution; at this point let us make a few remarks. In order to solve any problem, it is important to state it correctly. In

¹⁶⁷ To be sure, Schopenhauer did not belong to the category designated in psychiatry under the name of "dementia". He suffered from "paranoia", as we have just shown.

¹⁶⁸ See P. Siwek, S. J., *Psicologia Experimental* (São Paulo, Anchieta, 1948), chap. XXV, pp. 412-413.

¹⁶⁹ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, chap. 41, p. 274.

order to understand the meaning of death, and more broadly the meaning of suffering, of evil, in life, one must take care not to mutilate this life; it must be considered in all its integrity. Now this is our greatest grievance against pessimism. It considers only one fragment of life, namely, our terrestrial existence. It rejects, intentionally, the immortality of our soul. Let us show this briefly.

Schopenhauer ascertains that the thesis of our immortality is "as false" as "absolute annihilation".¹⁷⁰ But we would look in vain for a proof of what he puts forward. It is a great pity, for if he had taken the trouble to study the problem, he would not have been long, no doubt, in perceiving that it is precisely the mortality of the human soul which is as difficult to understand as absolute annihilation. In fact, why is absolute annihilation unrealizable by the forces of nature? Because all forces of nature applied to action always produce "something", some result; they resent having "nothingness" for the end of any activity. Now in order to deprive the human soul of its existence, one would precisely have to annihilate it. Any other kind of destruction is inconceivable for a simple and spiritual existence.

Schopenhauer ascertains that "all proofs accumulated in favor of the continuation of existence after death can also be turned over *in partem ante*, in order to demonstrate existence before life". This explanation seems so clear to Schopenhauer that he thinks himself authorized to dispense with a proof. We confess that we have no such evidence. We may well scrutinize the idea of the "continuation of the soul after man's death"; we find there nothing which might imply "its existence before man's birth".

In order to prove Schopenhauer's assertion, one would have to demonstrate that the being whose life "continues"

¹⁷⁰ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, p. 274.

indefinitely could never have "begun" it. This is what Schopenhauer did not do.

But let us study another assertion of Schopenhauer's, a very bold one. "To maintain that the birth of the animal is an apparition out of nothingness, that, consequently, death is its absolute annihilation, and then add that man, who also emerged from nothingness, must nevertheless, and this without losing his consciousness, preserve an individual and indefinite existence, while a dog would be annihilated by death, this is setting forth a hypothesis against which common sense must rebel and which it must declare absurd".¹⁷¹

At this point Schopenhauer becomes really unfair. In summing up his adversary's thought, he absolutely misconstrues it. In fact, according to the supporters of the immortality of the human soul, man and animal do not have the same origin, since the principle of life in the animal is not "created" as is the human soul. This difference in the origin of the two realities is due to the differences in their nature: the human soul is spiritual, the "principle of life" in the animal is not.

Somewhere Schopenhauer hints at the testimony of consciousness in favor of our immortality. "The deep conviction of the impossibility for death to annihilate us, this conviction which everyone carries at the bottom of his heart . . . is due to the consciousness of our primitive and eternal nature".¹⁷² However, he could not see in it any argument in favor of individual immortality. This is because consciousness, like all knowledge, reaches, according to him, only subjective phenomena. And we possess no means to pass from these phenomena to the deep reality, to the individual soul, since the principle of causality which would serve these means has for

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

¹⁷² *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, p. 298.

him only the value of an *a priori* form. But Schopenhauer deceives himself profoundly when he thinks that our consciousness reaches "our primitive and eternal nature". In fact, according to him, our primitive and eternal nature, as we already know, is the will. Now the perception of will is not immediate. "It reaches us through a series of intermediaries".¹⁷³ We do not perceive the will "in itself", but in its act. Now the act of the will is a phenomenon. This phenomenon is "the nearest and the most precise imitation of the thing in itself". Well and good. But it is nevertheless a phenomenon. We never perceive the will in itself.¹⁷⁴

In order to corroborate his argument, Schopenhauer appeals to the authority of Spinoza who said: *Sentimus experimurque nos aeternos esse* ("we feel and experience that we are eternal").¹⁷⁵ But what right had he to make this appeal? Spinoza did not profess an epistemological idealism, as did Schopenhauer, but a rationalism beyond all measure. Therefore he could, without contradicting himself, suppose that our existence¹⁷⁶ can reach directly the deep reality which, for him, was one with God. In Schopenhauer's system, inspired by Kantianism, this reaching is impossible.

After having thrown overboard individual immortality, Schopenhauer strives to prove that "our true being is beyond the reach of death".¹⁷⁷ This is so because our real being is the will, as he said above. But let us observe at once that this immortality is not the privilege of man. All species are eternal, since considered in essence¹⁷⁸ they are all the Will. With every death of man the Will leaves that special form in which

¹⁷³ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, p. 9.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁷⁵ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, p. 298.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. P. Siwek, S. J., *Spinoza et le panthéisme religieux* (Paris, 1950).

¹⁷⁷ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, p. 308.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 291-294.

it manifested itself. With every birth of man it again assumes a similar form. Is it perhaps the old theory of metempsychosis which reappears in Schopenhauer's system? Far from denying this, Schopenhauer confesses it formally; "so we are," he says, "led to . . . a kind of metempsychosis, but with this important difference, that our metempsychosis reaches, not the entire soul, that is to say the conscious being, but the Will only".¹⁷⁹

This metempsychosis will not go on eternally but only "up to the time when, educated and perfected by knowledge acquired by degrees so wide, so diversified, and under new forms, it would finally destroy itself".¹⁸⁰ Schopenhauer stresses with self-gratification the resemblance between his theory and the "esoteric doctrine of Buddhism".¹⁸¹

It is not our intention to start a discussion of the classical arguments cited by Schopenhauer in favor of this doctrine. We have already done so in another treatise.¹⁸² We shall only stop at certain "empiric reasons" which in Schopenhauer's eyes corroborate the doctrine mentioned.

"There is", so he says,¹⁸³ "a connection between the birth of the newcomers to life and the death of those who leave it; this connection is manifested by the great fecundity of the human race, which occurs after destructive epidemics . . . When, in the XIVth century, the Black Death had depopulated the greatest part of the old world, there followed a most extraordinary fecundity among the human race".¹⁸⁴ One is amazed to find Schopenhauer's signature under this argument. Those who survive after a great epidemic are, in gen-

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

¹⁸² *La réincarnation des esprits*, ed. cit.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

eral, the most robust ones. And the great "depopulation" around them spurs them on to have large families.

Once he had denied individual immortality, Schopenhauer, for this very reason, made the problem of evil extremely acute. For without individual immortality there is no plausible solution to this problem. The stirring pages of Tolstoi's *Confessions* are the best illustration of this fact. Let us quote a passage:

. . . the truth is, that life is nonsense. I had lived, worked, gone forward, and had reached an abyss, with nothing in front of me except disappearance. And yet, I could neither stop nor retrace my steps, nor close my eyes, so as not to see that outside suffering and absolute death, there was only emptiness, complete annihilation.¹⁸⁵ In this state I reached the point when I could not live any longer, and fearing death, I had to use stratagems in order not to kill myself.¹⁸⁶ . . . Nothing will be left but rot and worms; my actions, whatever they may be, will be forgotten sooner or later and I shall be no more. Why care then? How can man see that and live? This is amazing.¹⁸⁷ . . . Family, I thought; but family, wife, children, they, too, are men: they are in the same circumstances as I am; they must either live in delusion or face the dreadful truth. . . . Why, then, must they live? To know the same despair which is in me or to live as stupid beings? Since I love them, I cannot conceal the truth. . . . And the truth is death.¹⁸⁸

All the theories that teach us how to reach happiness in this world, in spite of the horrible phantom of absolute death, are only utopias. De Guyau promises us a day when everyone will be at the same time loving enough and loved enough to live and survive in others¹⁸⁹; the one who will depart and those who will remain will love each other so

¹⁸⁵ *Les Confessions*, transl. by Zoria (Paris, 1891), p. 49.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁸⁹ *L'irreligion de l'avenir* (6th ed., Paris, 1895), p. 471.

much that the shadows projected by them in universal consciousness will merge into only one.¹⁹⁰ Metchnikoff asserts "that men will at some time attain true happiness" by way of science. Thanks to its progress, all diseases will disappear from this world, old age will be deferred beyond the present limits, it will lose all its painful and repulsive characteristics.¹⁹¹

But "the immorality of affections", as preached by de Guyau, was never taken seriously by science. And as to the vision of future happiness as described by Metchnikoff, here is a very realistic page of Carrell's:

. . . As people die less nowadays of infectious diseases,¹⁹² they die more of degenerative ones, which are longer and more painful. The years of existence which we gain, thanks to the elimination of diphtheria, smallpox, typhoid, etc., are repaid by the prolonged pains which precede death, due to chronic affections. . . . Besides, civilized man is, just as formerly, exposed to syphilis and tumors of the brain, to its sclerosis, to its softening, to hemorrhages of its vessels, and to intellectual, moral, and physiological decay due to diseases. . . . Heart diseases become more numerous; also diabetes. As to the nervous affections of the central system, they are countless. . . . The organism has become more susceptible to degenerative diseases. . . .¹⁹³

And death itself? Will it ever be possible to wipe it out? Metchnikoff seems to think that there is no reason to the contrary, for, according to him, "natural death for man is . . .

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

¹⁹¹ Élie Metchnikoff, *Études sur la nature humaine, Essai de philosophie optimiste* (2nd ed., Paris, 1903), p. 393.

¹⁹² There are two classes of diseases: the infectious or microbial diseases and the degenerative diseases. The first are due to the penetration into the body of viruses or bacteria. The latter may be a consequence of the microbial diseases, of intoxications produced by the tissues which lack vitamins, minerals, salts, metals, etc. Cf. A. Carrell, *L'homme, cet inconnu* (Paris, 1935), pp. 132-133.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

rather potential than real";¹⁹⁴ probably it occurs only seldom at a very old age. On the other hand, if one must admit natural death for man, one must suppose that it is accompanied by the appearance of "the instinct of death", which would make death desirable and agreeable, "much more agreeable than any sensation we are able to feel".¹⁹⁵

The great mistake of these theories is the lack of a firm basis in "experience". And as to the "instinct of death", one never discovers any trace of it, even in centenarians, that is to say, in men nearing or reaching the age of "natural death".¹⁹⁶ On the other hand, the wish to die occurs in certain individuals who are far from the age of natural death. Their wish to die is only a cry of suffering. This desire generally disappears with the disappearance of suffering. "The death instinct" has against it also the following fact: fear of death is not felt with the same intensity at all the stages of an individual's life; it evolves; and it is precisely in the old man that it normally attains its climax. The experiences of every day make this evident. The confidences revealed on his deathbed by Charles Renouvier to his intimate friend, Louis Prat, are very instructive on this subject. "I am ashamed," he said to him, "to confess that the idea of death is very painful to me".¹⁹⁷ "I know that I am going to die, I cannot bring myself to be persuaded that I am going to die";¹⁹⁸ "at my age"¹⁹⁹ one doesn't have the right to hope any longer; the days are numbered, perhaps the hours".²⁰⁰ But "I do not die with-

¹⁹⁴ Metchnikoff, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

¹⁹⁶ According to Metchnikoff, natural death has no fixed date. But, in general, it should not appear before the age of one hundred. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 364.

¹⁹⁷ *Les derniers entretiens*, recueillis par Louis Prat (Paris, 1904), p. 30.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁹⁹ He was then eighty-eight years and eight months old.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

out regrets. I regret not being able to foresee in any way what will become of my ideas. . . . And I am going away before I have said my last word. We always go before we have finished our work. This is the saddest of all life's sorrows. Nor is that all. When we are old, very old, it is very painful to die. I would gladly believe that the young accept the idea of death more easily than the old. When one is past eighty, one becomes a coward, one no longer wishes to die. And when we know, beyond doubt, that death is near, it is great bitterness for the soul".²⁰¹

But will it ever be possible to do away with "accidental death", death due to accidents? Finally, death is not the only evil from which humanity is suffering. We saw this in the preceding pages. No. In eliminating personal immortality, there is no possible happiness left. And, consequently, the problem of Evil takes on a tragic form. "I believed, too, that, little by little, humanity could attain more happiness through the continual development of science and the sciences. And that was sheer stupidity. . . . Happiness should not be sought there", said Charles Renouvier a few days before his death.²⁰²

8. But this is not the only thing with which we reproach the pessimists. They also have exaggerated beyond measure the real evil from which we are suffering. Evil is not all in this world. On this point Hartmann agrees with us against Schopenhauer. Pleasure is no less real and positive than pain. Moreover, it is not necessarily mingled with pain or even only preceded or followed by it. Sometimes it comes to us quite unexpectedly, without our thinking of it. Introspection, even

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

²⁰² Charles Renouvier, *Les derniers entretiens*, recueillis par Louis Prat (Paris, 1904), p. 84. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 85. "Once"—said Helen Keller, who was blind and deaf all her life—"I knew only darkness and stillness. Now I know hope and joy. Once I fretted and beat myself against the wall that shut me in. Now I rejoice in the consciousness that I can . . . attain heaven." (Helen Keller, *Optimism, An Essay*, New York, 1903, p. 13.)

the simplest, makes this quite evident. If Schopenhauer did not notice it, it is because he was sick. He was a Daltonist as to joy. Besides, if everything were only evil, how could we have developed the idea of good? Where could we have discovered it?

But Hartmann, too, is at fault here. In fact, as we saw before, he maintains that evil surpasses good; that the "total balance of pleasure in this world is negative". This very assertion, we remember, constitutes the nucleus of his pessimism.²⁰³

Now how did Hartmann demonstrate it? To be sure, in order to do so, it is not enough to present to us some especially frustrated existence. For the misery of this poor creature might be compensated, in the total balance of the world, by the relative happiness of some other beings.

But we know Hartmann's answer. He will remind us of what he already said: suffering surpasses happiness by far, even in "the happiest of individuals". Therefore the idea of "compensation" mentioned above is deprived of any intelligible meaning.

Let us consider this last assertion of Hartmann's. Let us look for a proof of it. The supposed individual declares that he feels rather more happy than unhappy. Hartmann convinces him to the contrary. Would it not be necessary to this end to be able to compare all the pleasures and all the pains of this special individual? But for this operation, one must have a standard. Now who is to choose it? The individual himself or Hartmann? Certainly, neither will be willing to give in. In order to proceed in a strictly "objective" manner, would not a third person have to choose the stand-

²⁰³ *Zur Geschichte und Begründung des Pessimismus* (Berlin, 1880), p. 69.

ard? ²⁰⁴ But how? Pleasure and pain are not "static" realities, they are not "things", they are essentially "dynamic" realities, "actions" of the subject, and moreover, "immanent actions". As such they remain in the interior of the subject, they are not communicated; even more, they are confined in the consciousness of the individual. How could the person outside ever apply a measure to them? The ignorant will never be able to appreciate the pleasure of the scientist who, after persevering research, finds the solution to a scientific problem. The man who lives without any religion will never understand the ineffable pleasures hidden under the austere appearances of the religious life.²⁰⁵ Moreover, a cause which, to an outsider, looks insignificant may sometimes give to a man the first start to a very intense affection of pleasure or pain. This is due, first of all, to the fact that the "threshold of pain" is not the same for all, as shown by the experiences of the laboratory.²⁰⁶ Then, the cause mentioned may find in the subject certain affections, ideas, memories, which will give it an unexpected importance or even paralyze it. Schopenhauer was tormented all his life by the thought of death. Zola was haunted by the same idea after his mother's death.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Hartmann asserts that Schopenhauer's theory of pessimism is not really scientific. It is rather a transition from the poetical *Weltschmerz* to scientific pessimism. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 69. But why? Because it is not "objective" enough. It leaves too much to affection, to imagination, to aphorism, to pathos. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²⁰⁵ Certain authors believe that mortifications are for the believer "the real aim of human existence". This assertion deserves pity rather than refutation.

²⁰⁶ See for instance I. Ioteyko et M. Stefanowska, *Psycho-physiologie de la douleur* (Paris, 1909), pp. 157-169.

²⁰⁷ This is what we find in the *Journal des Goncourt* on this subject: "Zola said that when his mother died at Medan, the stairway was too narrow and it was necessary to lower her through a window, and that he never saw that window again without asking himself who was going to be lowered through it next, he or his wife? Yes, death, since that day is always in our thoughts and very often . . . at night, looking at my sleepless wife, I feel that she also is thinking of that, and we stay that way without ever alluding to

The idea of death also caused cruel sufferings to both Daudet²⁰⁸ and E. de Goncourt.²⁰⁹ Now many people ignore this torment as well as this obsession. Some face death with serenity, some others even with joy.

We have met several of them. Some of them were quite remarkable. Permit us to cite one. A young woman, quite normal mentally, assured us that the thought of death, far from frightening her, inspired her with great consolation; because it meant for her union with God and with the Saints. Now this assurance was not illusory, as we ourselves were tempted to think at first. In fact, having contracted tuberculosis at twenty-five, she persisted in the same state of mind until her death one year later. Moreover, a few months before she died, she had bought her coffin and placed it in her bedroom: the "consoling" sign of her imminent union with God. The letters which she wrote to us during this period are quite remarkable.

The same thing can be said of diseases, the loss of property, and so on. For instance, it is known that Duering²¹⁰ was in favor of the optimistic theory even though blind. Helen Keller, who has been blind and deaf all her life, is an enthusiastic propagator of optimism.²¹¹

what we are thinking of, both of us . . . through shame, yes, through a certain shame. . . . Oh, that is a terrible thought. . . . There are nights when I suddenly leap to my feet at the foot of my bed, and stay there a moment, in a state of unspeakable fright" (t. VI, 1878, 1884, 1892, p. 186).

²⁰⁸ "Daudet says—we read in the same *Journal des Goncourt*—that with him it is a persecution, a poisoning of his life, and that he has never entered a new apartment without looking about for the spot . . . for his coffin." (*Ibid.*, p. 186).

²⁰⁹ Jean Finot received from E. de Goncourt the confidence "that if he could banish from his mind the idea of death, life would be relieved of a great burden" (Jean Finot, *La philosophie de la longévité*, Paris, 1900, p. 209).

²¹⁰ J. Duering, *Der Wert des Lebens* (Leipzig, 1881), pp. 9 ff.

²¹¹ Helen Keller, *Optimism* (New York, 1903), p. 74: "I stand in the sunshine of a sincere and earnest optimism". (*Ibid.*, p. 13: "If I am happy in

Another comment. One generally admits that young people are very much inclined to pessimism. Why? Because, for lack of experience of life, they do not face things realistically enough. Therefore they are too exacting. At each disappointment, they are irritated, they rebel. The fact that Schopenhauer published his theory of pessimism when thirty-one years old,²¹² Hartmann when only twenty-six, is not a simple coincidence.

It is also notable that more than one person, pessimistic in his youth, becomes optimistic when older. This has a very natural explanation. In the course of life such persons learn to discern what is possible from what is not. And this knowledge teaches them to restrict their demands, to be satisfied with less. Moreover, they are wiser as to avoiding excesses and by so doing spare themselves much suffering. What wonder that they are more wont than young people to appreciate the advantage of existence and to look at the world from a more optimistic point of view?

We do not have to go far to find confirmation of our thesis. It suffices to read the life of the founder of pessimism. Schopenhauer in his old age is much more serene, more satisfied, in a word, less of a pessimist than he was in his youth. At times one could consider him frankly optimistic. At the age

spite of my deprivation, if my happiness is so deep that it is a faith, so thoughtful that it becomes a philosophy of life—if, in short, I am an optimist, my testimony to the creed of optimism is worth hearing". Cf. also pp. 14-15, 17, 25).

²¹² In the intimate *Journal of Schopenhauer*, we find among others the following words: "Inward discord is the very law of human nature, so long as a man lives . . . each must be a human being; that is, must be an unhappy creature, a fighter, a gladiator in the arena of life. Painless the battle cannot be; it may not end without bloodshed, and in any case man must mourn". These words were written in 1814. Already then, at the age of twenty-six, Schopenhauer professed the most authentic type of pessimism. But already, since 1812, he was occupied in the composition of his great work on pessimism. If we are to believe Schopenhauer himself, "all the ideas of his system—even the least—were already fixed in 1814."

of seventy he firmly believed that he had twenty more years to live. And this idea was far from disagreeable to him.²¹³ Comparing the different stages in man's life, he himself notes that "youth is characterized by a certain melancholy and sadness, while maturity is joyous". In so saying he certainly drew upon his own experience.

To strengthen Hartmann's theory, the psychological researches of Kowalewsky can perhaps be cited.²¹⁴ In a study of the private diary of Münsterberg, Kowalewsky showed that he, a solidly balanced man by no means pessimistic, nonetheless experienced more disagreeable emotions than agreeable ones. In another series of experiments, the same author set himself to determine the minimum quantity of different substances capable of producing in us a sensation of pleasant or unpleasant taste; he called this minimum quantity a "gustie". He then stated that it always required a much greater number of pleasant experiences to make a subject recover from an unpleasant state than it did to produce one. For example, the same number of gusties of sugar could never make the subject recover from the taste of that amount of quinine. The study of olfactory sensations gave Kowalewsky the same result. This result was confirmed by his study of good and bad humor, which he attempted to determine by a study of the rapidity of movements.

Do these arguments prove the pessimistic theory of Hartmann? We do not think so. In fact, so far as Münsterberg's private diary is concerned, we must remark that it is ille-

²¹³ Moebius has strikingly set forth the growth of Schopenhauer's optimism as he advanced in years. Cf. J. Moebius, *Ueber Schopenhauer* (Leipzig, 1899). In his works on Goethe, he makes the following judicious observation: "In theory one can remain a pessimist, but to be a pessimist in feelings, one has to be young. The older one gets, the tighter one holds to life". J. Moebius, *Goethe* (Leipzig, 1903), p. 182.

²¹⁴ B. Kowalewsky, *Studien zur Psychologie des Pessimismus* (Wiesbaden, 1904).

gitimate to found pessimism upon an isolated case. Even though Münsterberg may have in fact experienced more disagreeable than agreeable emotions, that of itself does not prove that everyone, or a great majority of people, has the same experience.

But did he really experience more unpleasant emotions than pleasant ones? Our hesitation on this point is justified when we observe that, in general, in an intimate diary, one puts down things which are striking because of their more or less exceptional and unusual nature. For ordinary normal things have little interest. But that does not mean that ordinary experiences are not pleasant. They constitute the warp and woof of our contentment, of our enjoyment of life.

Yet we do not wish to deny that man displays more sensitivity, in general, to pain than to pleasure. This fact has nothing astonishing about it. It is easily explained in the light of the finality of pain which we have discussed elsewhere.

Physiologists tell us that the number of "cold points" spread over the whole surface of our body is higher than the number of "hot points"; on a square centimeter, they tell us, there are twelve "cold points" to only two "hot points". The reason they give is the following one: cold is, in general, more harmful to the organism than is heat; so the organism should have more warning of cold than of heat.

Now we can apply the same reasoning to our case in hand. What pain informs man of is usually more important to him than that of which pleasure speaks to him. That is the reason why we more easily notice it than we do pleasure. But to say that a thing has more importance for our life is not the same as saying that it has a quantitative preponderance in our life.

What we have just said reveals, at the same time, the weakness of the argument of Kowalewsky drawn from "gustics"

in favor of pessimism. In fact, since disagreeable things make themselves felt more strongly than agreeable ones, it is to be expected that a more intense agreeable stimulus is needed to cause a disagreeable sensation to disappear.²¹⁵

Let us rapidly glance at the argument for pessimism drawn from an analysis of good humor and bad. Its worth appears to us very suspect. In fact, rapidity of movement is a sign of a state of excitation on the part of the subject. As such, it can be the accompaniment of agreeable as well as disagreeable states. An angry man tends to make energetic and rapid movements. On the other hand, there are pleasures which tend to slow up our movements, to make us "recollect" ourselves. The deeper pleasures, the pleasures we call "ecstatic", for example, are of this type.

Let us mention another attempt that certain scientists have made to resolve the problem posed by Hartmann. What is the most striking memory in our inner life: is it an agreeable one or a disagreeable one? They have asked themselves. They have asked this question of a great number of children. The answers gathered are very unfavorable to pessimism. The most striking memory given by the majority of children was definitely agreeable. Even the investigation undertaken on this topic by Kowalewsky confirms this fact.

Yet too much importance should not be given to this experiment. For what is valid for the child may not be so for the adult. Many sufferings are by their nature excluded from the child's world of experience. Moreover, the child's answer can easily be influenced by his state of soul, pleasant or

²¹⁵ We may add in parentheses, that Kowalewsky's experiments would have to be repeated if they were to give us scientific certitude. Moreover, we must not forget the criticisms leveled by the finest thinkers against any "measurement" in psychology. We have spoken of these elsewhere. Cf. *Psicologia Experimental*, op. cit., capit. IV.

unpleasant, at the time the question is asked. And in fact the question is usually asked him when he is well-disposed—during recreation.

All this is evidence enough that Hartmann's pretention to determine quite "objectively" the balance of pleasure and pain for an individual, and in the whole universe, will always remain a myth. And so, that argument which was taken from "experience" in favor of pessimism fails.

9. But the disciples of pessimism do not surrender. In order to save this theory at any cost, they appeal along with the school of Darwinism to the "struggle for existence", of which the living world is the scene, and to the principle *homo homini lupus* so dear to Schopenhauer. But this is an ineffectual defense. For the struggle for life finds its superabundant corrective in the help that living things give each other. What we have said about it elsewhere excuses us from insisting on that point. And as for the principle *homo homini lupus*, it is a single case of the battle for life. Its exaggeration is obvious. If, perhaps, Schopenhauer had suffered a great deal from other people, it remains to be seen whether he was not himself responsible for it. It is incontestable that his character, as described above, was not made to win him the hearts of his fellow-men.

Schopenhauer tries to support his complaints against men "by the ferocious envy inborn in everyone of us which in every circumstance of life bursts out when there is any question of possible superiority and cannot withhold its spite. This feeling of misery prevents men from enduring the life of a so-called happy man".²¹⁶

This again is a gross exaggeration. The terrible jealousy which Schopenhauer himself felt at the sight of the brilliant

²¹⁶ Op. cit., *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, p. 390.

success of his rival Hegel ²¹⁷ was a part of his own unhealthy condition mentioned above.

10. Let us pass on to another of Schopenhauer's arguments in favor of pessimism. "A slight alteration of the atmosphere, even chemically undemonstrable, produces cholera, yellow fever, black plague, etc., destroying millions of men; any alteration slightly more important would be enough to wipe out all life".²¹⁸ We do not intend to discuss this argument at length. It has no more value than the theory of "spontaneous generation" so obstinately defended by Schopenhauer in spite of all proofs to the contrary.²¹⁹ Epidemics, it is known, far from being a result of "the chemistry" of the world, are due to the presence of microbes. And there are now relatively easy means to get rid of them. For instance, cholera, which breaks out here and there, no longer results in a plague as formerly.

11. But according to Schopenhauer it is the purely negative character of pleasure which constitutes the most convincing argument of pessimism. Pleasure, supposedly, is but a simple ceasing, or a diminution, of pain.

So obvious is the fallacy of this argument that it has been dropped for a long time, even by the warmest defenders of pessimism. In order to demonstrate it, Hartmann names

²¹⁷ He never misses any opportunity to abuse him. Cf. *op. cit.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, p. 5, "Hegel's pseudophilosophy". *Ibid.*, p. 253: "the Hegelian pseudophilosophy, so suitable for corrupting and dulling the mind". *Ibid.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, p. 428: "this miserable Hegelianism". Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 394, etc.

²¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, p. 395.

²¹⁹ "However, for my part, and in spite of the most recent objections, I persist in my opinion that the *generatio aequivoca* is very plausible, in very inferior degrees, especially the entozoa and the epiroes. . . ." *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au Livre II*, 123. "So, in Brazil, after the fire of a virgin forest, August Saint-Hilaire saw spring forth from the ashes, hardly cooled off, a multitude of plants unknown in the whole country. . . ." Cf. also *ibid.*, chap. 28, p. 163. *Op. cit.*, *Livre II: Le monde considéré comme volonté*, pp. 145 ff.

certain pleasures of a superior order, especially the esthetic and scientific pleasures.²²⁰ They do not necessarily presuppose an anterior need painfully experienced.²²¹ This also we have already mentioned.

We have thus demonstrated the falsity of Schopenhauer's theory that the "essence of life" is suffering. Our assertion agrees with experience. In spite of the unquestionable miseries which are inherent in terrestrial life, the majority of mortals decidedly prefer existence to non-existence. Nature does not recommend pessimism.

12. Let us further consider the way in which the pessimists pretend to deliver the world from its suffering and bring it to "salvation".

Schopenhauer, as already mentioned, declares it a duty to deny the will to live. This duty, he adds, was already preached by the "true and primitive Christianity"²²² as preserved in Catholicism.²²³ What does this mean? To begin with the historical question, is it true that authentic Christianity²²⁴ ever has taught, as Schopenhauer pretends, the negation of the will to live according to the meaning he gives this expression? No. In fact, not authentic Christianity but only some obscure sects of the primitive Church ever considered marriage "as a compromise with the corrupt nature of man".²²⁵ The Church saw in marriage a morally good thing, even a "sacrament". And as to the "precept of pure

²²⁰ *Die Philosophie des Unbewussten*, op. cit., II, 296-304.

²²¹ Let us say, for the sake of exactitude, that Schopenhauer himself admitted that "the purest joy" lies in "real artistic pleasure". See op. cit., *Livre III: Le monde comme volonté*, p. 328.

²²² Op. cit., *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, pp. 421-428.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

²²⁴ According to Schopenhauer, Protestantism is not Christianity. See *ibid.*, p. 436.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

and true celibacy",²²⁶ it was only a counsel directed to certain souls. It has never been a compulsory precept for everyone. But we must at this point insist on the fact that the counsel was inspired by a quite different motive. In reality, it was not aiming at the extinction of the human race, the suppression of the "will to live", but rather a more comprehensive and more fruitful realization of this "will to live". "The anti-cosmic tendencies" that "the public enemies of Christianity" reproached the Church with,²²⁷ and that Schopenhauer considers as its purest title to glory, have never been encouraged by the Church. The ethics she teaches positively contributes to the maintenance and development of the human race, as demonstrated elsewhere. Far from suppressing the "will to live", authentic Christianity gives this will a full measure; it exalts the love of life, it stirs up great ambitions of everlasting glory. The sanctity preached by the Church does not kill the natural tendencies. It only imparts to them a special orientation.

But let us, from this historical question, pass to the problem itself. Is it even possible to kill the "will to live", to offer it as the term of its aspirations the annihilation of the individual? Schopenhauer believed it. He among others appeals to Nirvana taught by Buddha, of whom he is not only a fervent admirer²²⁸ but a devoted disciple; he owes him many of his ideas.

But, is Schopenhauer's interpretation of the Buddhist thought on this point correct? Our doubt is permissible. One knows many hypotheses that scientists have set forth about the Nirvana.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

²²⁸ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, chap. 46, p. 396; chap. 48, p. 416; *Livre III: Le monde comme volonté*, pp. 372-372.

However that may be, Schopenhauer considers himself compelled to add, as a "consolation", that our extinction will not be complete. It will not be, so he says, an absolute annihilation but a purely "relative" one.²²⁹ "With death, consciousness disappears, but not what produced and manifested consciousness; life dies out, but the principle of life manifested in it does not; our true being is out of death's reach".²³⁰ In other words, it is not any one Being who will live eternally, but we ourselves considered in what is most intimate in us. Schopenhauer did not draw from his theory the logical consequences.

But let us pass to another point of the question. According to Schopenhauer, our salvation must proceed from "individual" mortification, as we have seen above.

Here Hartmann reproaches him with a grave error in method, even a formal contradiction of his own principles. In reality, he says, Schopenhauer supposes that the individual can, thanks to his knowledge of the misery of the will and of being, suppress his individual will to exist; in other words, eliminate forever his future metempsychoses.²³¹

Now, how could the individual, who, according to Schopenhauer, is only a "subjective appearance", suppress his own will, which is part of the universal will—"its radiation"? Has the individual the power to annihilate the very reality of the universe?²³² Moreover, since our own body is, according to Schopenhauer, the result of our own will,²³³ by suppressing

²²⁹ *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au IV^e Livre*, p. 292. Cf. also chap. 48, p. 424; *Livre III: Le monde comme représentation*, p. 428.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

²³² One should remember that, according to Schopenhauer, the true reality is constituted by will.

²³³ Let us remark how often Schopenhauer's arguments are superficial. For instance, he proves that "organism is only will made visible". *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, p. 78: "What once more corroborates this opinion

our will we would at the same time suppress our body, the outward appearance of our will. Is not this conclusion in contradiction with experience?

But did Hartmann, who demonstrated so well the futility of Schopenhauer's theory, himself succeed in constructing a sounder one? We saw above how he understands the realization of salvation. According to him, salvation would be the result not of an individual but of a universal will, conceived at the same time by the whole of humanity or at least by a great majority of humanity. The Unconscious, enlightened by the knowledge acquired at the end of its evolution, will deny itself. While waiting for this supreme moment we can live joyfully so far as that is possible in this world.²³⁴

This solution of the problem of "salvation" is sharply contested by several Pessimists themselves. So, for instance, Mainländer, while admitting Hartmann's three illusions, reproaches his master with inconsistency. "You tell me," he remarks, "to choose a career, learn any kind of trade, win money, material goods, glory, power, honor, etc., get married and beget children. But in saying this you destroy with your own hands the only deserving thing in your work: the analysis of illusion. Suddenly you advise whoever has gone to the bottom of all these illusions to run after these same illusions, as if an unveiled illusion were still an illusion and could still have any influence".²³⁵

is the fact that bites of dogs, cats, roosters and other animals that are in an extreme state of temper are generally fatal. . . . For extreme temper is only an extremely resolute will, set about to destroy its object. In order to be convinced, it is enough to point out that in this state, drivel has a destructive power which seems almost magic; this clearly proves that organism and will are really one and the same thing. Another fact which corroborates our theory is that a great trouble may at once change the mother's milk and make it so pernicious that the nursling dies right away in convulsions". *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, pp. 78-79.

²³⁴ *Loc. cit.*, pp. 402-411.

²³⁵ Philipp Mainländer (Ph. Batz), *Die Philosophie der Erlösung* (2d ed., Frankfurt a. M., 1894), II, p. 637.

Mainlaender went to the very end of the consequences contained in his master's pessimistic theory, and took his own life when he was barely thirty-five years old.

Pessimism was often accused of developing in men the sense of discouragement and cheapening beyond all measure the value of life. Ed. v. Hartmann was very sensitive to this reproach. This is his answer: My book, so he says in the main, is not intended for "half-educated" people, but for the "most educated of the nation" (*die Höchstgebildeten der Nation*). "If the first ones succumb to despair after reading my work, it is their own fault. They should not open this book". And as to the reproach of depreciating the value of life, Hartmann contents himself with the following remark: "Truth is better than illusion".²³⁶ The pessimistic theory destroys only fallacious values. Far from destroying the instinctive tendencies which sustain the existence of the human species, it recommends us to cultivate them, to adapt our activity to the "idea". In this way one will have the maximum of possible satisfaction.²³⁷

This reply of Hartmann's leaves untouched the objection presented by Mainlaender. Hartmann makes it a moral duty to work for the "idea" or species. But the species exists only in its individuals. So we must work for the future individuals. Now, as the non-existence of these individuals is by far better than their existence, would it not be wiser to abstain from this labor? According to Hartmann, it results only in prolonging more and more terrible suffering, in creating poor wretches who will curse those who gave them birth.

Hartmann will perhaps answer: But these poor wretches, overwhelmed by bitterness, will finally wish for annihilation. Thus they will in the end escape evil. This answer implies

²³⁶ *Zur Geschichte und Begründung des Pessimismus*, op. cit., p. 91.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

an illusion greater yet than those mentioned before. Humanity, as we know it, will never be fascinated by the thought of nothingness. This is too repugnant to human nature. What we said above on this subject excuses us from further discussion of it.

Let us state another most important point. In order to lure man to bear the burden of his life, Hartmann has to make a few optimistic concessions, as already said. On the whole, it is thanks to this inconsistency that Hartmann's system can avoid a sudden disaster, of which the tragic vicissitudes of Mainlaender are an illustration.

In vain does Hartmann oppose his pessimism to the "discouraging pessimism", to the "quietist pessimism", and to the one he calls "miserabilism". His pessimism carried to its last consequences is disastrous.

13. Schopenhauer and Ed. v. Hartmann consider as childish and mythological the solution of the great problems offered by Theism.

This is not the place to point out all the fallacy of this assertion. Such a discussion would take us too far from our subject. Rather let us ask whether they themselves have succeeded in giving us a better solution. A will eternally starved, tortured, finally succeeds in producing (how, is not explained) a representation and with this a world. Or, the primitive Unconsciousness gives birth to will and intelligence from which come forth, respectively, things and thoughts. Is not this a little tainted with the old mythological theogonies?

In the same way, how can Schopenhauer's will, deprived of any intelligence, consequently absolutely blind, make a decision to get out of its deep obscurity and manifest itself outside? Can one really resolve to do something one does not know? How should one understand this determination

which occurs absolutely without any reason? This is caprice, or chance, carried to the Absolute.²³⁸ Our difficulty grows when we consider Nature's works. They impress us by a marvelous finality. Now if we are to trust Schopenhauer, this would be the result of the will acting "without any kind of knowledge".²³⁹ When a man loses consciousness, he becomes incapable of directing himself. The Will is, according to Schopenhauer, deprived of all consciousness, yet its actions astonish the greatest sages. The Will is, in Schopenhauer's concept, without any intelligence. But that does not prevent it from tending to certain determined ends nor from attaining them infallibly.

Certainly these matters are not self-evident. They require proof. Schopenhauer has omitted proof. His statements are, then, mere gratuitous assertions.

Some critics have noted in Schopenhauer a "certain free and easy manner of thought" which causes him to admit, "without any shame, whatever amuses him or serves his passion", and a certain "scorn of proof for his statements".²⁴⁰ These critics prove their point by a great many of Schopenhauer's assertions: his assertion of the way in which the order of phenomena becomes the order of noumena; his assertions concerning the multiplicity of individual beings which comes, he declares, from the unique Will, etc.

These criticisms seem to us quite justified. And we subscribe to the judgment of Cresson who says: "There is in Schopenhauer nothing of the methodical, careful, scrupulous philosopher whose wisdom inspires confidence. He is an

²³⁸ It is impossible that will should make a decision "without any reason". "Freedom of indifference", thus understood, cannot in any way be upheld. Cf. P. Siwek, *Psychologia Metaphysica*, op. cit., pp. 326-367.

²³⁹ II^e Livre: *Le monde considéré comme volonté*, op. cit., p. 119.

²⁴⁰ André Cresson, *Schopenhauer: sa vie, son œuvre*, Paris, 1946, p. 65.

embittered dreamer with too few motives for this . . . a friend of suggestive paradoxes and striking formulas".²⁴¹

We encounter the same difficulty in Ed v. Hartmann's system. How can the Unconscious produce things which disclose such a wonderful finality? One cannot solve this difficulty by appealing to "instinct", "thanks to which beings are able, with the greatest determination, to work towards an end they do not know and of which they do not even have any representation".²⁴² This answer contains an evident *petitio principii*. The reason is that instinct is only a special problem in the general problem of finality in nature.

But there would be no end to a discussion of all these problems. Let it be enough to focus attention on them. Besides, we have discussed them at length in other works.²⁴³

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²⁴² *Op. cit.*, *Supplément au II^e Livre*, chap. 27, p. 155.

²⁴³ Cf. *Spinoza et le panthéisme religieux*, *op. cit.*; *Psychologia Metaphysica*, *op. cit.*

OPTIMISM

1. Bayle's theory of Evil was vigorously attacked by several philosophers, especially by Leibnitz. The latter was not satisfied only to refuse the Manichæan dualism which it implies.¹ He built up a theory in which he strove to demonstrate that this world, such as it exists, is the best of all possible worlds. "If the slightest evil which exists in the world were missing", says Leibnitz emphatically, "it would no longer be this world, which, taking all things into consideration, was found the best by the Creator who chose it".² "It is true that it would be possible to realize a world without sin or misfortune, and one could write novels, utopias about those worlds; but these very worlds would be much inferior to ours".³

2. This theory has been called Optimism since the first half of the eighteenth century. Far from being a simple exaggeration of a polemic spirit, it is strongly attached to the philosophical system of Leibnitz, notably to his theory of first principles.

Leibnitz tells us: "There are two great principles in our reasonings; one is principle of contradiction, which asserts that of two contradictory propositions one is true and the other is false; the other principle is that of sufficient reason:

¹ *Essais de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, de la liberté de l'homme et de l'origine du mal* (2d ed., Amsterdam, 1714), 2d part, pp. 227-240.

² *Ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 9, p. 117.

³ *Ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 10, p. 117.

that is to say, nothing happens without a cause, or at least a sufficient reason, meaning some reason which can serve to explain *a priori* why this exists rather [in such a manner] than in any other".⁴ "The principle of contradiction or of identity alone suffices to explain all of arithmetic and geometry. . . . But we need another principle to pass from mathematics to physics. . . . It is the principle of sufficient reason (*raison suffisante*): that is to say, nothing happens without there being a reason why it should be so and not otherwise".⁵

This second "great principle"⁶ is not the result of induction which generalizes the data of experience because, first, "the sufficient reasons" are not "generally" sufficiently known to us.⁷ Moreover, "most of the time they cannot be known to us".⁸ Elsewhere Leibnitz says expressly: "It is one of the most important principles of good common sense that nothing ever happens without a cause or sufficient reason".⁹

The principle of sufficient reason must not be mistaken for the principle of causality in its classical form. Indeed, the principle of causality, understood as such, refers to contingent beings (*les choses contingentes*) and its aim is to designate an efficient cause for such contingent beings. Now

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 44, p. 156. *Remarques sur le livre de l'origine du mal*, chap. 14, pp. 51-53.

⁵ *Deuxième Lettre de Leibniz à Clarke*, chap. 1. Cf. *Troisième Lettre de Leibniz à Clarke*, chap. 1.

⁶ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . 1st part, chap. 44, p. 156. He claims to have been the first to "use" this principle in philosophy. (Cf. *Cinquième Lettre de Leibniz à Clarke*, chap. 7). However, in Spinoza's *Ethics* we find an analogous principle expressed in the following manner: *Cuiuscumque rei assignari debet causa seu ratio tam cur existit quam cur non existit. . . . Haec vero ratio seu causa vel in natura rei contineri debet vel extra ipsam. . . .* (*Ethica*, I pars, propos. II, Dem. "Aliter").

⁷ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . chap. 44, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-157.

⁸ Leibniz, *La Monadologie avec étude et notes* (Paris, 1900), p. 110.

⁹ *Lettre à Coste*. Cf. *Opuscules et fragments inédits*, ed. Paul Janet (Paris, 1900), p. 448.

the principle of sufficient reason finds its application in "every event" without any exception:¹⁰ contingent and eternal,¹¹ real and logical. I will quote certain texts which explain it: "The sufficient reason must be found both in contingent truths or truths of fact, that is to say, in the series of events spread throughout the world of creatures".¹² "We must render an account even of things that are eternal. If it is to be supposed that the world existed from eternity, and that in it there is nothing but globules, we must explain why there are globules rather than cubes".¹³ "Our reasoning is founded on two great principles: that of contradiction and that of sufficient reason, in virtue of which we consider that no fact can be true or existent, no proposition true without a sufficient reason".¹⁴

There has been much discussion about the relationship between the principle of causality and that of sufficient reason in the philosophy of Leibnitz. In our opinion, the matter is clear: what is currently called the principle of causality is a particular form which the principle of sufficient reason takes when it is applied to contingent being. "An infinity of geo-

¹⁰ *Essais de Théodicée*, 1st part, chap. 44, pp. 156-157.

¹¹ Let us note for reasons of exactitude that there is no real opposition between the "contingent" and the "eternal". The contingent states that the thing could not-be. It is opposed to the "necessary". The eternal, on the contrary, means a thing, the duration of which excludes the limits. It is opposed to what commences or ceases to exist. If we suppose that the world was created from all eternity, it would be "eternal" and "contingent" at the same time.

¹² *La Monadologie*, chap. 38, pp. 112-113. *Remarques sur le livre de l'Origine du mal*, op. cit., pp. 34-35; chap. 14, pp. 51-53.

¹³ *Opuscules et fragments inédits*, ed. Couturat (Paris, Alcan, 1903) p. 519.

¹⁴ *La Monadologie*, chap. 31, p. 109; chap. 36, p. 111; chap. 37, pp. 111-112. Leibnitz deduces from this principle "that there are no two beings absolutely indiscernible in nature; because if there were, God and Nature would act without any reason, by treating each other differently". Cf. *Cinquième Lettre de Leibniz à Clarke*, chap. 21. The creation "of two drops of water entirely like one another or of two indiscernible bodies" "would be contrary to the Wisdom of God" (*ibid.*, chap. 25; chap. 26).

metrical figures and of present and past movements" says Leibnitz, concur in order to constitute "the sufficient reason" of "my present writing". Now the same geometrical figures and the same movements "enter into the efficient cause of the writing in question". In the same way, however long—even infinite—"the series" of contingent things may be, their "sufficient or ultimate reason" must necessarily remain outside this series.¹⁵

The principle of the sufficient reason greatly surpasses the principle of causality, as we have mentioned. Now it is precisely to this principle of sufficient reason that Leibnitz attaches his optimism. This is what we find on this subject in the *Monadology*. "As there is an infinity of possible worlds in the ideas of God, and as but one can exist, there must be a sufficient reason for God's choice which determines him to create one rather than another".¹⁶ "And that reason can only be found in the suitability, in the degree of perfection, which these worlds contain, since each possibility has the right to claim existence according to the perfection which it contains".¹⁷ "And it is this that brings into existence the best world which His Wisdom makes known to God, which His Goodness makes Him choose, which His power produces".¹⁸ "It results from the highest perfection of God"—Leibnitz notes insistently in his *Principles of Nature and of Grace Founded on Reason*¹⁹—"that in producing the universe God chose the best possible plan where there would be the greatest variety with the greatest order. He chose the best arranged ground, place, and time; the greatest result

¹⁵ Cf. *La Monadologie*, chap. 36, p. 111; chap. 37, ed. cit., pp. 111-112.

¹⁶ *La Monadologie*, chap. 53, pp. 119-120. *Essais de Théodicée* . . . chap. 8, ed. cit., pp. 115-116; chap. 52, p. 110.

¹⁷ *La Monadologie*, chap. 54, p. 120.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 55, p. 120.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 98.

produced by the simplest means; and in creatures, the most power, the most knowledge, the most happiness, and the most kindness that the universe was able to contain. Since all possibilities tend to existence in God's understanding, in the measure of their perfection, the result of all these pretensions to existence on the part of the possibles must be the most perfect possible actual world. And without this it would be impossible to explain reasonably why things took one turn rather than another." "Thus when God makes a choice, it is for the very best reason".²⁰ "Nothing better could be done than what was done by God".²¹

This is how the Leibnitzian optimism proceeds from the fundamental principles of his philosophy.

3. Let us also glance over the theory of optimism as found in Malebranche's philosophy, especially since this theory had a certain influence on Leibnitz.²²

Since God is an "infinitely perfect Being," says Malebranche, "He cannot find except in Himself the motive of His decisions and the reasons of His behavior".²³ Thus it is "for His glory, because of the love He has for Himself"²⁴ that He conceived the plan to create a world. How is He to carry it out? In order to make this understandable, Malebranche resorts to an image. "An excellent worker—he observes—must proportion his action to his work; he does not use complicated means for a task that he can accomplish by simpler means. . . . Hence we conclude that God, discovering in the infinite treasures of His wisdom an infinity of possible

²⁰ *Lettre à M. Coste*, p. 709. *Remarques sur le livre de l'origine du mal*, chap. 22, p. 74-78.

²¹ *Causa Dei asserta per justitiam eius*, cap. 46, 17; cf. *Cinquième Lettre de Leibniz à Clarke*, c. 9; *Abrégé de la controverse*, Obj. VII et VIII.

²² *Essais de Théodicée* . . . 3d part, chap. 241, *op. cit.*, p. 422.

²³ *Entretiens sur la Métaphysique et sur la religion*, IX^{ème} Entretien, ed. Paul Fontana (Paris, 1922), II, 205.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 7, p. 205.

worlds, decided to create the one which could come to be and maintain itself in existence by the simplest laws".²⁵ In fact, everything in God's activity must bear "the mark of His attributes", everything must "honor Him", not only the plans He conceives but also the "ways" by which He carries out these plans.²⁶ "To this end God compares the wisdom of the plan with the wisdom of the ways, and chooses the plans and the ways which, taken together, bear to the greatest extent the marks, the stamp, of His attributes. This is my principle by which I shall justify God's wisdom and kindness, in spite of the disturbances of nature, of the monsters, the sin, the miseries to which we are subjected".²⁷ To be sure, "God could . . . make a world more perfect than the one in which we live. He could, for example, have had rain . . . fall more regularly on the farm lands than in the sea where it is not so necessary. But for this more perfect world, He would have been bound to change the simplicity of His means and to multiply the laws of the communication of movements by which our world subsists; and then there would no longer exist between God's action and His work that proportion which is necessary for determining an infinitely wise being to act; or at least, there would not have been the same perfect proportion between God's action as between the laws of nature and the world in which we live. For our world, as imperfect as one may venture to imagine it, is founded on laws of movements so simple that it is perfectly worthy of the infinite wisdom of its Author".²⁸ On the whole, according to Malebranche, these laws are only two in number. The first law holds that bodies once put in motion continue to

²⁵ *Traité de la nature et de la grâce*, art. XIII; *Œuvres Complètes* (Paris, 1837), p. 303.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 303. *IX^{ème} Entretien sur la Métaphysique*, chap. 10, p. 210.

²⁷ *Traité de la nature et de la grâce*, Addition, p. 303.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, art. XIV, p. 303.

move in a straight line; the second law says that when two bodies meet, their motion is communicated from one to the other in proportion to their pressure and according to the line of their pressure.²⁹

The present world is "the most perfect" that God could create, considering His design, intention, plan, and the "ways" by which it could be realized.³⁰ "A world more perfect, but resulting from ways less fruitful and less simple, would not bear the mark of the divine attributes" ³¹ as much as our world does.

4. Let us now consider a few critical observations about the optimism we have outlined. Let us begin with the argument found in several studies devoted to the refutation of optimism. Optimism—we are told—logically entails the negation of the Omnipotence of God and consequently leads to atheism. In fact, if the existing world is the best of all possible worlds, one must admit that God cannot produce anything better. Thus the Divine Omnipotence is limited. Now a limited Omnipotence is like "an infinite line terminated by two points". It is a fiction.

To us this whole reasoning does not seem sound. It strangely reminds us of the argument by which many writers, at the time of Spinoza, tried to demonstrate that God cannot create all that His intelligence conceives. For, so they said, "if God should create all that can be the object of His intelligence, He could not create anything more. Now this is contrary to the Omnipotence of God".³²

Spinoza rejects this argument with good reason, it seems to us. In fact the impossibility of creating anything, in the above-mentioned hypothesis, resembles, in the last analysis,

²⁹ *Ibid.*, art. XV, p. 303.

³⁰ *IX^{ème} Entretien*, chap. 9, pp. 208-209; chap. 10, pp. 210-211.

³¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, p. 207.

³² Spinoza, *Ethica*, I, prop. 17, schol. i.

the impossibility which prevents God from creating a square circle. In order to be able to create something, one must first conceive it.³³ Now the square circle is inconceivable; for a square circle would have to be a line, both curved and not curved, square and not square. Therefore it would have to realize contradictions. This is why nobody pretends that the impossibility of creating a square circle "limits" God's Power. Something similar happens in the pretension to create something better, once it has been supposed, that the best possible has already been created.

Now here is our true difficulty as to optimism: what meaning could "the best possible world" have? Is it even conceivable? To this our answer is negative: the best possible world is as little intelligible as, for instance, the square circle. In fact, the best possible world means a world, the perfection of which cannot be surpassed by any other world. So it is the last term of the series of possible worlds. Now the series of possible worlds is infinite; the partisans of optimism all agree with us on this point. So "the best world possible" can only be a fiction of the mind, since "the last term" is inconceivable in an infinite series.

One more difficulty. No matter how perfect one imagines the world, its perfection will always remain finite. Far from denying this affirmation, the optimists teach explicitly that the present world, which they think is the best possible one, contains many imperfections.³⁴ Thus there will always be between that world which is deemed the best, and infinite perfection, an infinite distance. But if such is the case, it will always be possible to interpolate other worlds, more and

³³ It is a question here of a logical priority, and not a temporal one which implies an interval between what precedes and what follows.

³⁴ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , chap. 21, p. 133. *Abrégé de la controverse réduite à des arguments en forme*, Obj. II-V. Malebranche, *Traité de la nature et de la grâce*, Addition, p. 303.

more perfect, between the world mentioned and the infinite. In this very way "the best world" loses all intelligibility. It is a myth.

Still another difficulty. According to the optimists, the world's purpose is to glorify God by the manifestation of His perfections. "God acts only in view of His glory", Malebranche says expressly;³⁵ moreover, God "cannot act but to serve His glory".³⁶ "When God created the universe, He had no "end" in view but Himself and His own glory". These words of Jacqueslot in his *Traité de la Conformité de la foi et de la raison* are fully endorsed by Leibnitz, who quotes them.³⁷

It follows that "the best world" would be the one which would manifest the Divine perfections in a way that no other world could ever be able to do. Now can we say that of our world? Does it manifest the Divine perfections in this way? The defenders of optimism answer in the affirmative. But upon what do they found their assertion? Perhaps on experience? No, since they formally admit that there is much evil in the world, which might not have existed. "God could no doubt make a world more perfect than the one we are living in", Malebranche says expressly.³⁸ He "could convert all men, prevent all disorders"³⁹, etc.

So the theory of the optimism of the world is based on a few *a priori* considerations.⁴⁰ They are summed up in the following argument: Our world proceeds from God; now

³⁵ IX^{ème} Entretien, chap. 10, p. 211; chap. 12, p. 213.

³⁶ IX^{ème} Entretien, chap. 12, p. 213.

³⁷ Essais de Théodicée . . . II, chap. 160, pp. 312-313.

³⁸ Traité de la nature et de la grâce, art. XIV.

³⁹ IX^{ème} Entretien, chap. 11, p. 212.

⁴⁰ That is to say, on certain qualifications of the "efficient cause" of the world. See Leibniz, *Essais de Théodicée* . . . Discours de la conformité de la foi avec la raison, chap. 59, p. 70; *ibid.*, chap. 2, pp. 3-4; *ibid.*, chap. 5, pp. 7-8; *ibid.*, chap. 35, p. 44. *Méditations sur la connaissance, la vérité et les idées* . . . , II, 517.

whatever proceeds from God possesses all possible perfection; so, our world possesses all the possible perfections.

The major of this argument does not at this point present any special difficulty. The minor alone calls for proof.

This proof we find expressed by Malebranche as follows: The characteristic of God "is to act exactly according to what He is and according to all that He is".⁴¹ Now in so doing, how could the Infinite Being fail to give all possible perfection to the world?

In Leibnitz the proof of the minor is found in the following words: "The supreme wisdom, together with a goodness that is not less infinite, could not fail to choose the best. For as a lesser evil is a kind of good, so a lesser good is a kind of evil if it is an obstacle to a greater good; and something would have to be corrected in God's actions if it were possible to do better".⁴²

At bottom these two arguments are the same: Since God is infinitely perfect, He cannot produce anything but the most perfect things. But the method used by the two philosophers for proving this is quite different. Malebranche departs from the creative action considered in itself; Leibnitz dwells upon the relativity of the ideas of good and evil.

In fact, here is what Malebranche's argument amounts to if we understand it correctly. Our actions vary almost ad *infinitum* as to the degree of their perfection and realization. This is because we do not act according to all that we are; we only act according to our different parts: faculties, organs, powers. Now there are no parts in God; He is absolutely simple, as admitted by everybody. So all His essence, all His nature, is the immediate source of any of God's actions. This is why the Divine action cannot be fragmentary, incomplete,

⁴¹ IX^{ème} Entretien, chap. 11, p. 212.

⁴² Essais de Théodicée . . . , 1st part, chap. 8, pp. 115-116.

imperfect. It is necessarily integral, total, absolutely perfect.

What does this mean? Is Malebranche's reasoning correct? It does not seem to be. In reality, action can be considered in two different ways, inasmuch as it is in its source and in its term.

The source of action is the very substance of the being. In fact, it is always the substance which acts: Faculties are only instruments of the substance and its forces. The actions which seem the simplest suppose the cooperation of the entire being. Is there anything simpler than the "reflex motion" which we often make in spite of ourselves under the influence of an outside stimulus? Now we know that this reflex mechanism is very complicated, much more complicated than Descartes supposed it. Let us add that the nerves which immediately produce the reflex motion depend at all times on an extremely complicated combination of conditions, both anatomic and physiological. One may say without gross exaggeration that all our activity depends on all our cells.⁴³ This is the meaning in which we can say with Malebranche that any agent acts "according to what he is".

Now as the Divine substance is infinitely perfect, its action must be such as well. On this point we quite agree with Malebranche.

But action can be considered from another point of view; that is to say, inasmuch as it is in its term. In this case action may vary at the will of many factors, especially of the free will. With the same hand and the same strength, I can now write, now draw, now sew, now push a body or compress it, etc. In this connection we are justified in saying that the being endowed with freedom does not always act "exactly according to what he is", and *a fortiori*, he does not act "ac-

⁴³ See e.g., C. M. Child, "The Beginnings of Unity and Order in Living Things" in *The Unconscious: A Symposium* (New York, 1929), pp. 15 ff.

cording to all that he is". And let us say this, by the way—precisely in this resides his greatness and his nobility. The machine cannot manage, at its will, its exterior efficiency. It always acts "according to all that it is". Therefore it invariably produces the same results.⁴⁴

What a cruel irony! In desiring to exalt the action of an infinitely wise and good God, Malebranche ends by debasing God to the level of the actions of automatons. In reality, the God of Malebranche is unable to manage or adjust His exterior action. He faithfully carries out what His intelligence presents to Him as most perfect. He cannot choose. But how, under these conditions, could one still consider God as a free being? Fénelon reproached Malebranche with having submitted God to determinism.⁴⁵ And he was not wrong.

But we must forestall an objection which will soon be presented at this point. Our adversaries will say, "Yet you admit the principle *opera Dei sunt perfecta*—the works of God are perfect. Then you must also admit that the world, which is God's work, is perfect. Now as a lesser imperfection is a kind of perfection, in the same way a lesser perfection is a kind of imperfection. In order that the world be really "perfect", it must consequently be "the best". This is the reasoning of Leibnitz to which we have referred above.

Here is our reply. The principle invoked (*opera Dei sunt perfecta*) is quite true. All that derives immediately from God, and without the assistance of secondary causes, must have, from the beginning, all the perfection pertaining to its nature. Thus, to illustrate the thing by a concrete example: if one admits that the first man was created by God Himself, one must also admit that this man could not have been

⁴⁴ Although animals and plants do not have free will, they actually do possess a certain "freedom". We have spoken of it in our book *La psychophysique humaine d'après Aristote* (Paris, Alcan, 1930).

⁴⁵ *Réfutation du système du P. Malebranche sur la nature et la grâce*, chap. VI.

created either one-eyed, or lame, or deaf, etc.; that he possessed from the beginning certain notions necessary to his existence and his conservation, a language, etc. In brief, the first man had to be created "perfect".⁴⁶

Now the same reasoning applies to the world. If one supposes it created by God (and not by the caprice of a demiurge or an eon), one must admit that it possessed from the beginning all that was necessary to its existence and its conservation. In this meaning it had to be "perfect"; the elements which constituted its "matter", the order (proportion and disposition) of these elements on which its "form" depends, all that had to be conditioned by the precise aim which God, the Creator, was assigning to the world. Nothing should be useless, nothing superfluous.⁴⁷

This is the sense in which we can also admit an "optimism" of the world. But it is obvious that it will be a very relative or moderate optimism, having nothing in common with the optimism we are refuting, which is an absolute optimism.

Our "perfect world" does not exclude the hypothesis of the existence of a more perfect world. We do not see any decisive reason why God should have created the "most perfect world possible", why His action should have been submitted to the "rule of the best".⁴⁸

⁴⁶ It is in virtue of this principle, let us note in passing, that the Sacred Congregation of Rites refuses to recognize as "miracles", partial and incomplete or very slow cures. We have discussed this more at length in our studies on the famous stigmatic of our days, Theresa Neumann.

⁴⁷ Several celebrated philosophers have written splendid pages on this subject. See, for instance, Aristotle *De gener. et corrupt.* ii. 10. 336^b 25-29; *De part. animal.* ii. 13. 658^a 9-10; *De Coelo* ii. 4. 288^a 3-10; *De gener. animal.* ii. 4. 739^b 16-20; 6. 744^b 1627; 743^b 20-25; 744^a 36; 744^b 2; iv. 1. 766^a 6-7; 2. 767^a 17-18; v. 8. 788^b 22-24; *De incessu animal.* 2. 704^b 12-18; 11. 711^a 18-19.

⁴⁸ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . 1st part, chap. 8, pp. 115-116; chap. 52, pp. 163-164; 2d part, chap. 160, pp. 312-313; chap. 168, pp. 324-325; chap. 233, pp. 411-412; 3d part, chap. 248, 282. *Abrégé* . . . , Obj. VII, VIII, pp. 638-643.

When I am told that God cannot choose anything contrary to the moral law, I understand perfectly why it is so. In fact, moral law is not external to God, it does not come to Him from the outside, since there is no legislator above God; it is immanent; it is one with His essence. For it is truly His essence which constitutes the ultimate foundation of morality for all. This is why one cannot conceive any deviation between the Divine action and the "right way", why God never can choose a moral evil.

But can we, by way of the same reasoning, demonstrate that God can never choose between two unequal goods, one of whose objective perfection is inferior to the perfection of the other? This is the problem. The defenders of optimism believe that this problem should be answered affirmatively. But why? Is it because such a choice should be considered as "immoral"? But as this opinion is not immediately evident, it would have to be strongly proved, which it is not. Moreover, it obviously contains the germ of that "moral rigorism" condemned by common sense as well as by philosophy and by religion. And when the disciples of Leibnitz declare that "a lesser good is a kind of evil", they are guilty of a deplorable confusion of ideas. To make it clear, let us take some concrete example. Let us suppose that a Catholic, instead of going to mass on Sunday, enjoys sleeping. Sleep is healthy, it is a real good. However, it is, beyond dispute, a lesser good than the accomplishment of the serious moral duty of which there is question. Now if it is considered under these concrete conditions as a moral evil, as a "sin", is it perhaps because it is a lesser good than the other? Decidedly not. But only because, under the mentioned conditions, it is contrary to the moral law, it implies a "deprivation of moral rectitude". What is positive in the act remains good; so the same action can be meritorious during the weekdays. It

only becomes "bad" because of the mentioned deprivation.

Let us apply what has just been said to God, the Creator. To create a world "less perfect" would be for Him a real "evil" only in the hypothesis that He would be morally bound not to do it. But it is clear that this way we only come back to our initial problem: why should God always choose a more perfect world? Why should not He be allowed to create a less perfect world?

The disciples of Leibnitz will perhaps say: whatever this question may involve, it is certain that will power when facing two unequal goods can never choose the lesser good.

Whence comes this impossibility, shall we ask them? Could it be that the lesser good confronted with a greater good would cease, by this very fact, to be a "good"? ⁴⁹ No, since "good" is not simply an extrinsic denomination. Good implies a certain immanent "perfection", as said above; and this does not disappear owing to the mere fact that it has been confronted with a greater good.

We ask once more: whence comes this impossibility of which we are told? Is it perhaps that the good deemed "greater" than the other has an irresistible influence on the will? That is precisely what happens is Leibnitz's reply. "There is always a dominant reason which induces the will to its choice"; ⁵⁰ "the will is determined only by the greater good of the object"; ⁵¹ "the will is never induced to act but by the greater good of the object"; ⁵² "the will is never induced to act but by the representation of the good which

⁴⁹ Since the object of the will is "the good", it is obvious that it could not choose the object mentioned.

⁵⁰ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 1st part, chap. 45, p. 157. *Remarques sur le livre de l'origine du mal*, chap. 16-17, pp. 55-60.

⁵¹ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , *ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

prevails over contrary representations"; ⁵³ "we always follow, in exercising our will, the result of all the inclinations which come from reason as well as from passions"; ⁵⁴ "so everything is . . . determined in advance, in man as well as everywhere else, and man is a kind of spiritual automaton"; ⁵⁵ "when I say, this pleases me, it is like saying, I find it good. Thus it is the ideal good of the object . . . which decides the choice of it among many others . . . that contain less of the good which affects me"; ⁵⁶ "one may say, in a certain sense, that man must . . . choose the part which after all appeals to him most"; ⁵⁷ "all causes, internal and external as well, make the soul decide with certainty"; ⁵⁸ "I believe that the will always follows the most advantageous representation, distinct or confused, of good and evil, which results from reasons, passions, and inclinations". ⁵⁹

We could multiply the texts. Why bother? The ones we just quoted plainly show Leibnitz's thought touching the problem in which we are interested: the will always chooses the greatest good. Any theory which would claim the contrary "would clash with the great principle of sufficient reason". ⁶⁰

What we have just learned from Leibnitz holds good for any will properly so called. God, as well as man, can choose only the best: ⁶¹ "After having compared all possible worlds, He must choose the one which is the best . . . and admit it

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 51, p. 163.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 52, p. 163; 3d part, chap. 402, pp. 601-602.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2d part, chap. 110, p. 230.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3d part, chap. 282, p. 468.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2d part, chap. 371, p. 568.

⁵⁹ *Remarques sur le livre de l'origine du mal*, chap. 13, p. 51.

⁶⁰ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 2d part, chap. 175, p. 340, *ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 45, pp. 157-158.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 8, pp. 115-116; chap. 21, pp. 21, 132-133; chap. 45, pp. 157-158; chap. 52, pp. 163-164; 2d part, chap. 117, pp. 238-239; chap.

into existence through the almighty word of Fiat, with all that this world contains";⁶² "when one says that goodness alone determined God to create this universe, it is fair to add that His goodness made Him, before this, create and produce all the good possible; but that His wisdom made the selection and was responsible for His choosing, later, the best".⁶³

But if God is bound to choose only the best, His action is subject to necessity. No, replies Leibnitz, "one is never subjected to necessity in one's choices".⁶⁴

But what necessity are you speaking of here, let us ask Leibnitz. "I mean here a necessity which is absolute or metaphysical", he replies, without any ambiguity.⁶⁵ A little further on he goes back to the same idea. "Freedom must exclude any absolute and metaphysical or logical"⁶⁶ or even "geometrical"⁶⁷ necessity. This is because exclusion of metaphysical certainty is essential to the notion of the contingent, and only the "contingent" can be submitted to choice.⁶⁸ What is absolutely or metaphysically necessary forces itself on our will with a might against which we are helpless. Even God is helpless in this case.

But if this is true, could it not be said that all that occurs in Nature results from freedom, that all natural causes act

130, pp. 267-269; chap. 160, pp. 312-313; chap. 168, pp. 322-325; chap. 322, pp. 512-513; 3d part, chap. 248, pp. 428-429; chap. 282, pp. 468-470. *Causa Dei asserta* . . . , chap. 46, p. 17; chap. 67, p. 23.

⁶² *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 1st part, chap. 52, p. 164.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2d part, chap. 116, pp. 237-238. *Ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 23, p. 135; chap. 25, pp. 136-137.

⁶⁴ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 2d part, chap. 132, p. 271; *Remarques sur le livre de l'origine du mal*, chap. 19, p. 64; chap. 21, pp. 69-74; chap. 22, pp. 74-78. *Causa Dei asserta* . . . , chaps. 101-108, pp. 33-35.

⁶⁵ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 2d part, chap. 132, pp. 270-271.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 3d part, chap. 302, p. 492; also, chap. 282, p. 468-470.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 2, p. 4; 3d part, chap. 282, pp. 468-470. *Cinquième Lettre de Leibniz à Clarke*, chap. 4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 3d part, chap. 288, p. 476; also, 1st part, chap. 53, pp. 164-165; 3d part, chap. 302, p. 492.

freely, since (in order to illustrate this by an example) there is no absolute contradiction (metaphysical, logical, or mathematical) in fire not burning?⁶⁹ Here is Leibnitz' reply to this difficulty. Contingency is a necessary "condition" to the exercise of freedom, but it is not a sufficient condition. A second condition is required, namely intelligence.⁷⁰ This is why animals deprived of intelligence and a man dead drunk are unable to act freely.⁷¹

But does this answer solve our difficulty completely? We do not think so. Because, according to Leibnitz himself, intelligence is a mere "condition" of the use of the free will; it makes choice possible, it prepares it, it does not constitute it. In fact, intelligence has the sole aim of enlightening us about the "weightier reason" which alone should determine our choice. This we saw above. So long as we think that the goods to be chosen from are equal, we are unable to make our choice. This is why, if the hypothesis of Buridan's donkey were possible, "one would have to say that it would let itself die of hunger".⁷²

The real principle, thanks to which the intellectual substance has dominion over itself, over its own actions,⁷³ is, according to Leibnitz, "spontaneity". For spontaneity is responsible for the fact "that our actions and will-acts depend completely on us".⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Absolute necessity is defined by Leibnitz as well as other philosophers of his time "the one of which the opposite implies contradiction". *Discours de la conformité de la loi avec la raison*, ed. Paul Janet (Paris, 1866), II, 33; also *Remarques sur le livre de l'origine du mal*, chap. 14, pp. 51-53. *Causa Dei asserta* . . . , chap. 21, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁰ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 3d part, chap. 302, p. 492; chap. 288, pp. 476-477.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 34, p. 147; 3d part, chap. 302, p. 492; also, *Causa Dei asserta* . . . , chap. 20, pp. 8-9.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 49, p. 161.

⁷³ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 3d part, chap. 291, pp. 479-480; 1st part, chap. 59, pp. 171-173.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

But in what does this spontaneity consist? Leibnitz answers with Aristotle's words: "action is spontaneous when its principle is inside the person who acts".⁷⁵ Now it is indisputable that "we have in ourselves the principle of our actions".⁷⁶ Moreover, "to speak with philosophical rigor, external things have no influence on us" at all.⁷⁷ "It is true that impressions of outward things often turn us from our path and that this leads to the common belief, that at least in this respect, part of the principles of our actions is outside of us; and I confess that one has to speak this way, in adapting oneself to popular speech, which can be done to a certain point without infringing upon truth,"⁷⁸ but when it is a question of exact understanding I maintain that our spontaneity does not admit of any exception".⁷⁹

This spontaneity is intimately bound to the "system of pre-established harmony":⁸⁰ there is no physical communication⁸¹ between soul and body; ⁸² states of soul follow each other within the soul, with a strict uniformity,⁸³ each suc-

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 3d part, chap. 301, p. 491.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 3d part, chap. 290, pp. 478-479.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ He himself sometimes adopts this popular language. Cf., e.g., *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 2d part, chap. 371, pp. 568-569.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 3d part, chap. 290, p. 479; also, *ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 59, pp. 171-173.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 59, p. 172. *La Monadologie*, chap. 69, pp. 122-123; chap. 78, p. 130; chap. 79, p. 130. *Cinquième Lettre de Leibniz à Clarke*, chap. 89. In the way Suarez-explains the efficacy of prayers, Leibnitz sees a "sample" of preordered harmony. Cf. *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 3d part, chap. 310, pp. 498-500.

⁸¹ Leibnitz admits only a "metaphysical communication" between the soul and body, but it consists in this, that "Soul and body compose the same agent, or what one calls a person". *Ibid.*, 1st part, chap. 59, p. 173.

⁸² *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 1st part, chap. 59, p. 173; 3d part, chap. 399, pp. 597-598; chap. 400, pp. 598-599. *Deuxième Lettre de Leibniz à Clarke*, chap. 5.

⁸³ *La Monadologie*, chap. 7, pp. 95-96; chap. 11, p. 98.

ceeding state being rigorously determined by the preceding state by virtue of the principle of sufficient reason. "The future is in a latent state in the present; it could be guessed from the past; the distance is expressed in the near-by".⁸⁴ Now this is true also of the will. How, then, is it possible in this case to speak of freedom?

Now such an automatism can also be found in God. Here are a few texts in support of this assertion.

"Metaphysically speaking, God could choose, or do, what would not have been the best [that is to say, we do not see here any logical contradiction], but He could not do it from a moral standpoint".⁸⁵ "Just as metaphysical necessity is absurd in regard to God's actions *ad extra*, so moral necessity is worthy of Him. . . . As all possibilities are not compatible with one another in the same universe, it is for this very reason that all possibilities could not be produced, and one must say that God is not forced to the creation of this world from a metaphysical point of view. One can say that, as soon as God has decreed something to be created, there is a fight between all possibilities, all of them aspiring to existence; those which, put together, produce the most reality, the most perfection, the most intelligibility are the ones which triumph. To be true this fight can only be ideal, that is to say, a conflict of reasons in the most perfect understanding. . . . However, God is bound by a moral necessity to do things in such a way that He could not act better; otherwise, not only would others have cause to criticize what He does, but they would also take exception to the imperfection, which is contrary to the sovereign happiness of the divine nature. This continuous feeling of His own guilt or imperfection would be an

⁸⁴ *Les principes de la nature et de la grâce*, chap. 13.

⁸⁵ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 3d part, chap. 234, p. 413.

inevitable source of grief".⁸⁶ "If God had not chosen the best universe, He would have done something worse than all the sins of the creatures; for He would have stooped from His own perfection . . . since the lesser good implies some evil. And God would be overthrown. . . ."⁸⁷

So, finally, this present world emerged from a competition of all possible worlds. It owes its existence to its victory.⁸⁸ God, so to speak, only ratified it. To act differently would have meant that God would commit an "imperfection", even a grave "sin", and consequently cause Himself perpetual "grief" and remorse which would have deprived Him of His eternal beatitude, His Divinity. But as all these consequences are repugnant in God absolutely or metaphysically, it follows that He was bound by an absolute, metaphysical necessity to create the best world. The distinction between "moral" ne-

⁸⁶ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 2d part, chap. 201, pp. 373-374; *Causa Dei asserta* . . . , c. 67.

Here let us note a curious fact. Whenever Leibnitz speaks of the free will, he remains systematically silent on the "physical" necessity, "the one which produces the order in nature and consists in the rules of motion and in some other general laws". (Leibnitz, *Essais de Théodicée*, part I, n. 2). Why? Because these laws were freely chosen (among all possible ones) by God, and consequently "the physical necessity is founded on the moral one" (*ibid.*, n. 2) which led to their choice.

The words we find toward the end of the *Théodicée* deserve attention. "In reality", so we read, "I think that only the followers of Hobbes and Spinoza can be reproached with destroying freedom and contingency; for they believe that what happens is the only possible thing, and must happen by a brutal and geometrical necessity" (part III, n. 371). The choice which God makes of the best world "is free and independent from necessity because it takes place between several possible things, and the will is determined only by prevalent goodness" (*Essais de Théodicée*, 1st part, chap. 45, p. 158). This explanation does not surpass the limits of psychological determinism.

⁸⁷ "As in mathematics, when there is no maximum or minimum . . . everything happens equally, or, when it is not possible, nothing happens: we can likewise, with perfect wisdom, which is not less regulated than mathematics, suppose that God would not have created any world if there were no best one [optimum] among all the possible worlds" (*Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 1st part, chap. 8, p. 116).

⁸⁸ *Essais de Théodicée* . . . , 2d part, chap. 201, pp. 372-374.

cessity and "absolute" necessity has absolutely no meaning here.

Optimism, under the pretense of exalting God, actually degrades Him. It is incompatible with Theism.

5. Before finishing this subject, let us say a word more on the matter of "relative or moderate optimism", the thesis to which we referred above.

When we ask if our actual world could be better than it is, it is most important that we make precise the meaning of this question. The world is, in fact, constituted by two principles: matter and form. Matter, so to speak, is the existing things which are in the world. Form is the manner in which they are ordered, or to be more clear, it is, in a sense, the sum of the relations which unite things to each other.

And so the problem just stated can be understood in two different ways: 1. Could an actual world contain more perfect beings than it does? 2. The beings which exist in our world—could they be better ordered than they are?

The answer to the first question is not too difficult. It is evident that God can create, in this world, more perfect beings—for example, certain new species of living beings. The consequence of this creation would be to reduce considerably the amount of suffering, of evil in the world. But then—and this is evident—we would be abandoning our hypothesis. For we would then be dealing not with our actual world but with a different world!

Let us pass to the consideration of the second question: Could the things which exist in this world be better ordered? To answer this question it is enough to note that the order of this world is not the effect of chance or of an external necessity. It springs from the world itself. For it is founded upon the laws of nature. Now the laws of nature spring from the depths of the beings existing in nature: as the being is, so the

law will be. The natural law is only a special aspect of the being of nature. In fact, nature, as we have tried to show elsewhere, is essentially dynamic. And its tendencies—whose ensemble is precisely what make up “the laws of nature”—are only the manifestation of its immanent dynamism. If one calls these tendencies “contingent”, one can only do so in the sense in which we say that the natures which make up the world are “contingent”. But with regard to these particular natures, they are necessary, physically necessary. Therefore to change these tendencies, one would have first to change the natures themselves. The conclusion is inevitable: the actual world cannot be better ordered.

That is the meaning of “relative or moderate optimism”.⁸⁹ But this optimism is by no means rigid. It permits individuals to “ameliorate”, within certain limits and by their own efforts, the world in which they live. This is true not only of man, who, thanks to his intelligence, can use nature for his needs, but also, though in a lesser degree, it is true of animals and of plants. Animals and plants thus constitute *imperia in imperio*. What we have said before of the “immanent finality” of living beings dispenses us from insisting on this point.

But to limit our consideration to man, we have seen that

⁸⁹ According to certain authors, relative or moderate optimism consists in this, that the cause of the world is the most perfect possible cause. For is not God the efficient, exemplary, and final cause of the world?

This manner of understanding the matter does not seem to us so fortunate. And for two reasons. First of all, such a proceeding considers the goodness of the world in an entirely extrinsic manner, since the cause in question is not immanent to the world. Secondly, any universe, whatsoever its character, would always be “the best”. For its efficient, exemplary, and final cause would always be God.

And thus the problem of optimism of the world would lose all its intelligibility in this theory.

As regards the beautiful theory of St. Thomas Aquinas on this question, it is enough that we refer the reader to the study of Alexander Rozwadowski, S. I., *De optimismo universalis secundum S. Thomam*, Gregorianum (1936), pp. 254-264.

everything in the world, without any exception, even the most atrocious, even death itself, can work to his good. There is nothing in the world which is absolutely and irremediably bad for him. In that consists the greatness of his free will, which makes him the Creator of his own destiny.

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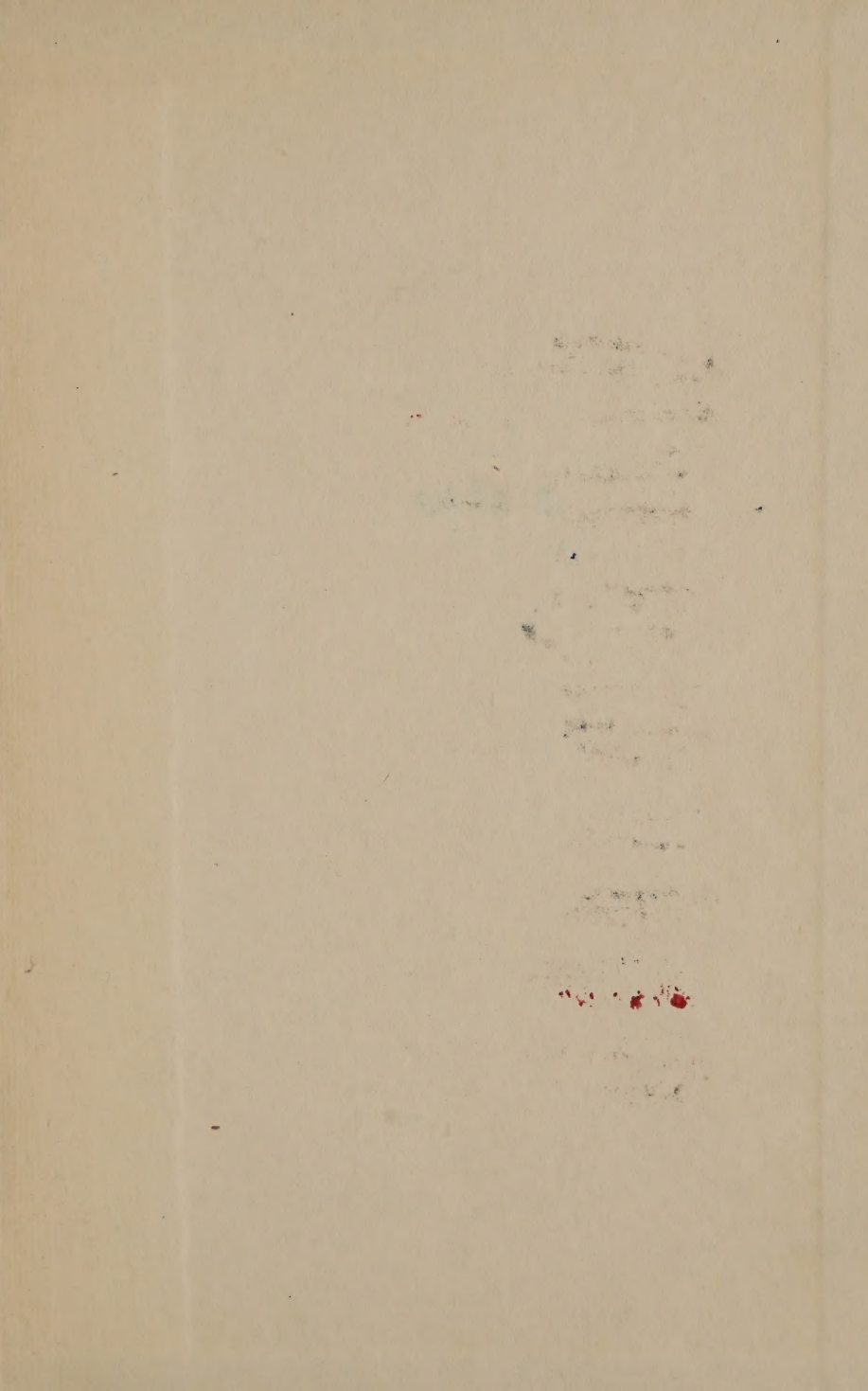
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